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NAVIGATING THE CHESS ECOSYSTEM

THE IMPACT OF TECHNOLOGY AND GLOBALISATION ON CHESS



CASABLANCA'S CHESS RENAISSANCE: MODERN MASTERS PLAY HISTORIC POSITIONS



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QUALITY over QUANTITY

Since Covid, we have witnessed an explosion of chess events – first online and then over-the-board. There is now so much chess going on it's increasingly difficult to keep up

Having almost exhausted the available space and time for tournaments for the world's top players, the chess community is now turning towards amateur and occasional players and trying to figure out new formats that will appeal to a wider and even non-chess playing audience.

One example is the recent tournament in Morocco - the Casablanca Chess Variant - where the players started with an historical chessboard position which they had 10 minutes to study before playing the position on. The event brought a lot of excitement and interest (read Alex Colovic's analysis of the event in this issue of BCM) from both players and the audience.

From the 14th to the 17th of June this year, the connection between chess and business will aim to go one level further up as the World Corporate Chess Championship finals take place in New York, just a stone's throw from Wall Street and the One World Trade Centre. Twelve teams will take part representing global business giants including UBS, Deutsche Bank, Google, BlackRock and others.

We have even seen chess make a move to the stock market with the recent listing of World Chess on the London Stock Exchange (*investors please note that the shares have fallen substantially since listing in April 2023*).

The number of open tournaments in recent times has exploded globally (mainly in Europe, but India is catching up) while Chess.com alone saw a record 12.5 billion games played on its platform in 2023. Not to mention the numerous blitz and rapid online events which every chess platform seems to be hosting daily.

And now, FIDE is attempting to set a Guinness World Record on International Chess Day (20th July 2024) for the largest number of online and over-the-board games played in 24 hours.

As Peter O'Brien writes in his article in this issue of BCM about the Chess Ecosystem, chess has categorically evolved from a pastime for a narrow elite to a global movement available to everyone and is profoundly influenced by today's rapid social, technological and cultural shifts.

New ideas and more chess events are good for the development and popularity of the game, but it seems - at least to us - that the market is becoming saturated. Players are enticed in by the financial rewards on offer but are undoubtedly feeling the strain. This can lead to events losing meaning and interest, the quality of play being adversely affected, and theoretically important ideas being lost or little noticed because the next event and format innovation is just around the corner. Once the impact of a novelty wears off events may appear repetitive, and audience and player interest will decline together with the financial commitment of sponsors.

There are clear similarities with other sports which face the same challenges and opportunities of much increased availability and rapid format innovation. The impact of white ball cricket for example is by no means universally welcomed - characterised by high turnover of events and format changes, short time limits and a blunt transactional approach. We believe that

the importance of "slower chess", in which the finer skills and nuances of the game can be played out over several hours, should be reasserted and re-evaluated amid the increasing volume of chess now being played.

Quality endures and has longevity, and importance is attributed to subjective assessments of value and excellence. Quantity prioritises volumes which can be measured and counted objectively, and is less if at all concerned with quality. There is a place for both of course in chess as in all other fields, but the two approaches are in fundamental tension.

While the current focus still seems to be on the quantity of chess played, we believe that organisers, administrators - starting at the top with FIDE - and sponsors alike should pay more attention to preserving and celebrating the quality of chess now being played, particularly at the top level. Great progress has been made in recent times in making chess more varied, enjoyable and accessible to seasoned players and newcomers alike. Having done that let us now find ways of making manifest once again the deep allure and magic of chess.

BCM Editor

In our article "A Balkan Triumph at the European Team Championships" in the December 2023 issue of BCM we published photographs of the event provided for media use on the event website. We had approval from the event organizers to publish these photographs, but we inadvertently omitted to mention that they were taken by the official event photographer, Mr. Mark Livshitz. This was an oversight on our part for which we apologise and which we are happy to correct. May we also thank Mr. Livshitz for his excellent work.



CASABLANCA CHESS WEEK

REINVENTING THE CLASSICS: A MODERN TWIST ON CHESS HISTORY

By GM Aleksandar Colovic; www.alexcolovic.com

Photo: Casablanca Chess Week / Maria Emelianova and Lennart Ootes

A unique tournament in Casablanca featured four top world players - Magnus Carlsen, Viswanathan Anand, Hikaru Nakamura and Bassem Amin - using a rapid format with historical starting positions selected by Grandmasters and by public vote

To celebrate the 100th anniversary since its inception, FIDE is organising many events throughout the world. One of these was the commercial and exhibition-style tournament in Casablanca (18-19 May), won by Magnus Carlsen.

To ensure maximum visibility, the invited players were former World Champions Magnus Carlsen and Viswanathan Anand, “the streamer” Hikaru Nakamura and the best African player Bassem Amin.

The time-control was the ever more popular rapid 15 minutes + 10 seconds per move. However, the spice of the tournament was the format!

The players competed in a double-round robin with each round starting with a different position.

The positions that were selected by Grandmasters Laurent Fressinet and Hicham Hamdouchi (Morocco’s best player and one of the best players on the continent) were used in rounds one, two, four and five, while the remaining two positions were selected by a popular vote on Youtube and Twitch, when the public would choose one from the three proposed positions. Curiously enough, the players themselves could also vote!

The positions used in the tournament were selected from famous (or at least well-known) games from chess history. It must have been a welcome change for the players, not having to prepare for games: upon arrival at the board, they received a piece of paper with the moves leading to the selected position and had two minutes to think about the positions before the clocks were started.



Losing to Carlsen in 20 moves happens even to the former world Champion: Visly Anand (Photo: Lennart Ootes)

STEINITZ-CHIGORIN WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP MATCH HAVANA, 1889

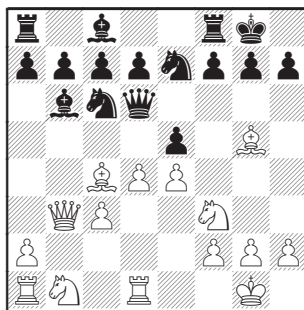
The first round started with a truly historical reference. The position used was from the World Championship match Steinitz-Chigorin played in Havana in 1889. In that match the players engaged in fascinating opening duels, one of them being in the Evans Gambit. Both players were convinced in their correctness - Chigorin believed in the attacking potential of the white position while Steinitz believed in the extra pawn and the lack of weaknesses.

Modern engines evaluate the position as equal, but it's characteristic that in both games White won in miniature - Carlsen beat Anand in 20 moves while Nakamura beat Amin in 28. Compare this to the fact that Steinitz won the game playing with the black pieces!

Magnus Carlsen - Viswanathan Anand

Casablanca Chess 2024 Casablanca MAR (1.1)

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♙c4 ♙c5 4.b4 ♙xb4
5.c3 ♙a5 6.0-0 ♙f6 7.d4 ♘ge7 8.♙g5
♙d6 9.♙b3 0-0 10.♙d1 ♙b6



This is the position that was presented to the players.

11.♘a3 Carlsen deviates from Chigorin's play. According to the engine, his move is inferior.

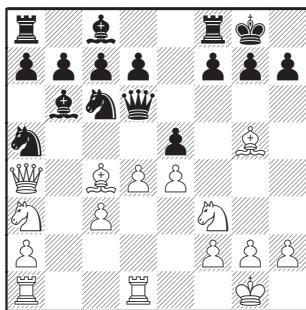
11.dxe5 was played by Chigorin and this is the engine's top choice. 11...♙g6 12.♙a3? (12.♘bd2 is better, leading to unclear play after 12...♙h5 13.♙xe7 ♘xe7 14.♙f1) 12...♙e8? not bad, but Black had a tactical shot at his disposal. (12...♘xe5! should win for Black. 13.♙xe7 (13.♙xe7 ♘xc4; 13.♘xe5 ♙xg5 and Black has an extra pawn, pair of bishops and a better structure.) 13...♘xf3+ 14.♙h1 ♘xh2! 15.♙xh2

♙xf2 and White ends up getting mated or loses too much material.) 13.♘bd2 the game is unclear again. 13...d6 14.exd6 cxd6 15.♙f4 ♙c5 16.♖c1 ♙g4 17.♙g3 ♖ad8 18.h3?? an elementary blunder by Chigorin. (18.♙e1 kept the game unclear.) 18...♙xf3 19.♘xf3 ♖xg3 the simple operation won Black a piece and he won seven moves later. 0-1 (26) Chigorin,M-Steinitz,W Havana 1889;

11.♙f1?! Nakamura's choice was even worse than Carlsen's. Does this mean these players understand dynamics worse than Chigorin? Probably not, but a curious case nevertheless. 11...exd4 12.cxd4 ♘g6? (12...♖g6! gave Black an advantage.) 13.♘c3 White has compensation now. 13...♘xd4? (13...h6 14.♙c1 ♖e7 was still fine for Black.) 14.♖xd4! ♙xd4 15.♘b5 White is winning now. 15...♙xa1 16.♘xd6 cxd6 17.h4 in spite of having two rooks and two pawns for the queen Black is lost since the rooks are nowhere near to taking part in the game. 1-0 (28) Nakamura,H (2795)-Amin,B (2683) Casablanca MAR 2024.

11...♘a5 11...exd4 12.cxd4 ♖g6 is preferred by the engine, giving Black a slight advantage.

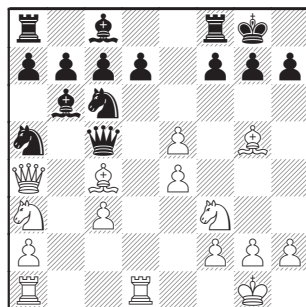
12.♖a4 ♘ec6?!



12...exd4 13.♘b5 ♖c5! 14.♙d3 dxc3 15.♖ac1 d5 leads to a complete mess, though one that is objectively balanced.

13.dxe5?! 13.d5! would have pinpointed the clogged position of the black pieces on the queenside.

13...♖c5?



The decisive mistake.

13...♖g6 was the only move, with an unclear position after 14.♙f4 ♘xc4 15.♘xc4 ♙c5

14.♖d5! Carlsen finally nails it.

14...♖xf2+ 15.♙h1 Black's pieces are too entangled to get away without material losses.

15...♖b2 15...h6 16.♖f1 ♖b2 17.♙d2 threatening ♖b5.

16.♖b1 ♖xa3 Desperate, but Black was lost anyway.

17.♖xa3 ♘c4 18.♖a4 ♘e3 19.♖xb6 ♘xd5 20.♖xc6 White ends up with too much material, so Black resigned. It's curious that all four players played worse than the great predecessors did until the unfortunate blunder by Chigorin.

1-0



What would have Xie Jun done in my place? After all, it was her position:
Hikaru Nakamura (Photo: Maria Emelianova)

XIE JUN-GALLIAMOVA WOMEN'S WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP MATCH KAZAN (RUSSIA) AND SHENYANG (CHINA), 1999

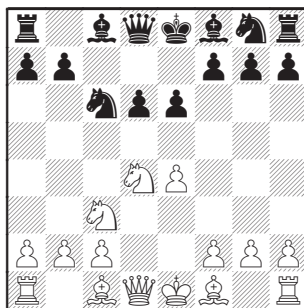
The position from the second round was from the Women's World Championship match Xie Jun-Galliamova in 1999, though it has also been played with Black by Garry Kasparov one year prior, albeit in an online blitz game. The balanced position from the Sicilian Scheveningen was an unfortunate choice because it gave Black a chance to equalise immediately by the central ... d5 break, something that both players with the black pieces, Carlsen (against Amin) and Nakamura (against Anand), took advantage of, leading to rather uneventful draws.

The position from round three featured a game from the second World Championship match between Karpov and Kasparov, played in 1985. Karpov's idea to play g4 in the Sicilian without a black knight on f6 was considered something of a revelation back then.

Hikaru Nakamura - Magnus Carlsen

Casablanca Chess 2024 Casablanca MAR (3.1)

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 e6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 ♘c6
5.♘c3 d6

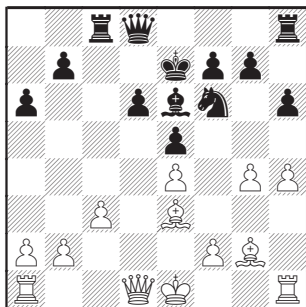


Kasparov wasn't very comfortable against the Keres Attack in the Scheveningen (*arising after 4...♘f6 5.♘c3 d6 6.g4*) so he chose a set-up that postpones the development of the knight on g8. Karpov still surprised him with his next move.

6.g4! h6 7.h4 a6 8.♙g2 ♙e7 9.♙e3 ♘xd4
10.♙xd4 e5 11.♙d1 ♙e6 The starting position for the players.

12.♟d5 ♖c8 13.c3 ♜f6 13...♟xh4!? Anand took the pawn that neither Kasparov or Carlsen dared to and it turned out to be the most practical choice, leading to an immediate repetition after 14.♟b6 ♖g5 15.♟e3 ♗d8 16.♟b6 ♖g5 17.♟e3 ♗d8 ½-½ (17) Amin,B (2683)-Anand,V (2751) Casablanca MAR 2024.

14.♟xe7 ♖xe7



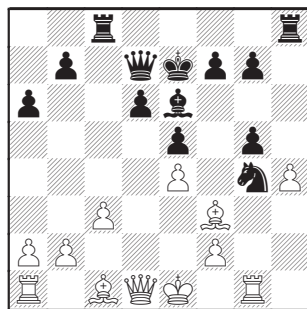
14...♖xe7 was Kasparov's choice. Both recaptures are possible. 15.g5 hxg5 16.hxg5 ♖xh1+ 17.♟xh1 ♜g4 18.♟d2 ♖f8 19.♖f3 ♖h8 was fine for Black and the game was drawn in 32 moves. ½-½ (32) Karpov,A (2720)-Kasparov,G (2700) Moscow 1985.

15.g5 ♜g4 16.♟c1 hxg5 17.♟f3? 17.f3! was correct, making sure the knight leaves

the g4-square. 17...♜f6 18.♟xg5 (18.hxg5? ♖xh1+ 19.♟xh1 ♖h8! Black wins using Kasparov's idea of queen activation along the h-file. 20.gxf6+ gxf6 21.♟g2 ♖h4+ and Black has a winning attack.) 18...♖b6 19.♖d2 with an unclear position with chances for both sides.

17...♖d7! This is the problem - the knight will stay on g4.

18.♖g1



18...♜h2! 19.♟xg5+ 19.♟e2 g4 20.♖g2 ♜f3+ 21.♟xf3 gxf3 22.♖xf3 ♖cg8 is much better for Black since White doesn't have compensation for the weak pawn on h4.

Discussing history: Africa's top player Bassem Amin and Hikaru Nakamura
(Photo: Maria Emelianova)



19...f6 20.♙e3 ♖cg8 The position is already practically winning for Black - the pawn on h4 is a weakness that cannot be defended.

21.h5 ♜xf3+ 22.♗xf3 ♗b5 22...♙f7 was also possible, going after the pawn on h5.

23.♙c1 23.0-0-0 ♙xa2 is the problem with the long castle.

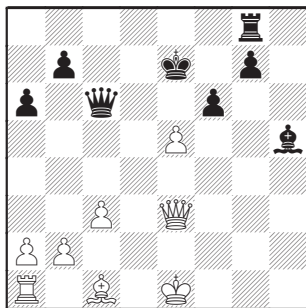
23...♙f7 24.♖h1 ♗a4 Threatening ...♗c2. White's defences are stretched to the maximum.

25.♗e2 d5 The Sicilian break opens the game in Black's favour.

26.exd5 ♙xd5 27.♖h2 ♗c6 The threat is ...♙f3.

28.f4 ♙f3 29.♗e3 ♖xh5 Finally collecting the weak pawn.

30.♖xh5 ♙xh5 31.fxe5



31...♖e8! A nice move, emphasising the problems White has on the e-file.

32.♗g1 ♙f7 33.♙e3 ♖xe5 34.♙d2 ♗d5+ 35.♙c1 ♖xe3 Mate on d1 comes in case White takes the rook.

0-1

A powerful demonstration of the potential of the black pieces by Carlsen. Eventually this game turned out to be the decisive one for first place.

MAGNUS CARLSEN: THIS IS A FUN FORMAT

"It was a fun format for sure, I would definitely like to try it again. With one exception in game two, all the positions were very rich with lots of play. It doesn't really matter if you are playing White or Black, because you know that the position is equal and there are chances for both sides. It is also a lot of fun to end up in positions that I don't play too often. I enjoyed it a lot."



(Photo: Maria Emelianova)

HIKARU NAKAMURA: THIS CONCEPT IS BETTER THAN THE FISCHER RANDOM

"I enjoyed myself immensely. I think this variant actually is my current favorite. Far surpassing Fischer Random at the moment, simply because even though we ended up with fresh positions, it's still classical chess. It's still based on the history of what chess has been for the last 600+ years. And frankly, the games were just really, really creative."



Ten minutes before the games, the players got to see their starting positions (Photo: Lennart Ootes)

ALEKHINE-EUWE WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP MATCH THE NETHERLANDS, 1935

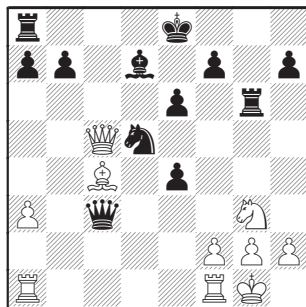
The fourth position came from the first World Championship match Alekhine-Euwe in 1935, though the variation of the French Defence it came from was played many times later, including the World Championship matches Botvinnik-Smyslov in 1954 and 1957, with Smyslov playing with the white pieces.

Nakamura beat Amin with some luck (as he admitted) while Carlsen's drawing combination against Anand was pleasing to the eye.



Viswanathan Anand - Magnus Carlsen

Casablanca Chess 2024 Casablanca MAR (4.2)



19.♖xe4 Things look scary for Black, with the queen on c3 hanging and threats like ♜d6, but Carlsen forces the draw with

19...♗xg2+! 20.♙xg2 ♜f4+ 21.♙g1 ♜h3+ 22.♙g2 ♜f4+ 23.♙g1 23.♙h1 ♙f3+ would be a mate.

23...♜h3+ Not a very common perpetual check pattern.

1/2-1/2

Still in great form:
Former World Champion Vishy Anand
(Photo: Lennart Ootes)



The playing hall in Casablanca
(Photo: Lennart Ootes)

KASPAROV-KARPOV WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP MATCH SEVILLE, 1987

The fifth position came from the decisive 24th game in the match Kasparov-Karpov in Seville 1987. Kasparov famously used the Reti Opening to enter a position where he could play a long game. The tension got to Karpov who missed a couple of drawing chances in severe time-trouble and Kasparov defended his title.

Anand didn't have much problems to neutralise Nakamura, though later in the game he allowed the American winning chances. Luckily for him, Nakamura missed them. Carlsen eventually beat Amin in a very uneven game where he also let his winning advantage slip several times.

The final position was the second one from the Women's World Championship match Xie Jun-Galliamova from 1999. It featured a sharp Rauzer Sicilian. Curiously enough, yours truly also played this position with the white pieces in 2009.

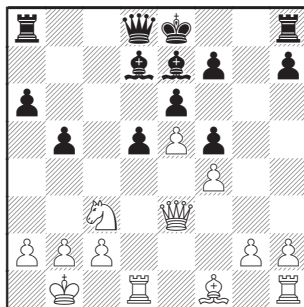
The duel of the heavy-weights between Carlsen and Nakamura ended in a draw, while Anand

beat Amin. The draw meant that Carlsen won the tournament a point ahead of Nakamura and point and a half ahead of Anand.

Viswanathan Anand – Amin Basem

Casablanca Chess 2024 Casablanca MAR (6.1)

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 ♗f6 5.♗c3 d6 6.♕g5 e6 7.♞d2 a6 8.0-0-0 ♘xd4 9.♞xd4 ♕e7 10.f4 b5 11.♕xf6 gxf6 12.e5 d5 13.♖b1 ♕d7 14.♞e3 f5



The starting position for the players.

15.♗e2 Anand chooses a slower approach.

15.g4 is likely the best, chosen by both Xie Jun and Carlsen. 15...fxg4 16.h3 (16.



Lighting the flame: The FIDE100 Torch Relay in Morocco
(Photo Dana Reizniece-Ozola)

f5 was played by yours truly, though it's the inferior move. It led to a sharp and unclear position after 16...♞c7 17.h3 ½-½ (28) Colovic,A-Oms Pallisse,J, Figueres 2009.) 16...gxf3 17.♞xf3 (17.♞xf3 was Xie's choice. 17...♞c7 18.f5 0-0-0 19.♞hf1 ♖b8 20.fxe6 fxe6 21.♞f7 d4! 22.♞xd4 ♕c5 23.♕e2 h5? a mistake, missing White's next move. After 23...♞hf8 or 23...♞b6 the position would have remained unclear. 24.b4! ♕xd4 25.♕xd4 ♖c8 26.♕g2 ♞hg8 27.♕c6+ ♖a8 28.♞xd7 ♞xd7 29.♕b8+ 1-0 (29) Xie,J (2528)-Galliamova,A (2556) Kazan/Shenyang 1999) 17...♞c7 18.♞g1 b4 19.♞g7 ♖f8 20.♕e2 ♖c8 21.♕d4 ♕c5 22.♞xh7 this allows Black counterplay. Removing the knight from the square where it can be exchanged by 22.♕b3 was better, keeping the better chances. 22...♕xd4 23.♞xd4 ♞c5 with counterplay for Black. There were further imprecisions from both sides, since White could have won, but the game eventually ended in a draw. ½-½ (36) Carlsen,M (2830)-Nakamura,H (2795) Casablanca MAR 2024.

15...b4?! 15...h5! is strong and the reason why 15.g4 is to be preferred.

16.♞f3?! Anand prepares g4, but this is too slow.

16.g4! fxe6 17.h3 is even stronger now, as the knight on e2 can come to d4, while Black wasted a move on ...b4.

16...♞b6 This is also fine.

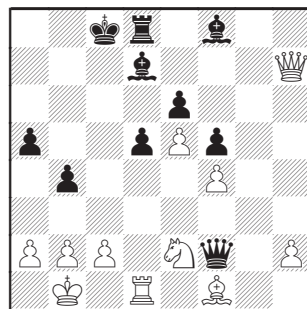
16...h5 is more practical, stopping g4 for good.

17.g4 fxe6 18.♞xg4 0-0-0 19.♞h5 f5 20.♞g1?! Black is better in the current pawn structure.

20.exf6 ♕xf6 21.♕c1 is unclear.

20...a5 20...♕c5 21.♞g7 ♖b8 22.♞xh7 ♞xh7 23.♞xh7 ♕e3 is better for Black, as White is weak on the dark squares.

21.♞g7 ♕f8 22.♞xh7 ♞xh7 23.♞xh7 ♞f2?



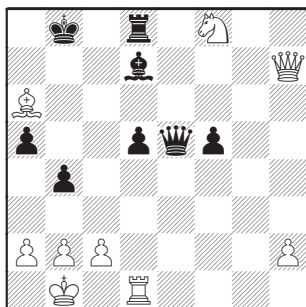
A blunder.

23...♔b8 24.h4 a4 is unclear, as Black threatens ...b3 to open the position of the white king.

24.♞d4! All of a sudden the black king is under attack. The threat is ♙a6 followed by ♞xe6.

24...♞xf4 25.♞xe6 25.♙a6+ ♔b8
26.♞xe6 leads to the same.

25...♞xe5 26.♙a6+ ♔b8 27.♞xf8



White wins a piece, so Amin resigned.

1-0

The idea of the tournament was undoubtedly fun and led to interesting games. The participants also liked the idea and the format. The key is in the selection of the positions, which would allow the players to show their abilities.

Particularly interesting is selecting positions from a long time ago, akin to the Chigorin-Steinitz position above, when comparing the play of the modern players and the players from the past can give us interesting insights about the relative strength of the players.

Let's see if the idea gains popularity and inspires other organisers to hold similar events. I already have a few ideas about possible positions.



The dark knight, presented to the winner
(Photo: Lennart Ootes)



The Casablanca Variant Quartet: Nakamura, Baseem, Carlsen and Anand
(Photo: Lennart Ootes)

 CASABLANCA CHESS									
	MAGNUS CARLSEN		HIKARU NAKAMURA		VISWANATHAN ANAND		BASSEM AMIN		TOTAL
MAGNUS CARLSEN			1	0.5	1	0.5	0.5	1	4.5
HIKARU NAKAMURA	0	0.5			0.5	0.5	1	1	3.5
VISWANATHAN ANAND	0	0.5	0.5	0.5			0.5	1	3
BASSEM AMIN	0.5	0	0	0	0.5	0			1

BCM Interview: Tarik SENHAJI, Organiser of the Casablanca Chess Week

THE CASABLANCA VARIANT IN CHESS IS LIKE A FORMULA 1 RACE IN THE RAIN

By: Milan Dinic

Tarik Senhaji is the director of the Casablanca Stock Exchange, and he has a strong passion for chess. In an interview for the British Chess Magazine, Senhaji talks about the Casablanca Variation – a new chess concept which he invented together with his Moroccan compatriot, GM Hichem Hamdouchi, as well as about the Casablanca Chess Week which gave a breath of fresh air to chess in Africa and globally.

BCM: *How did you come to the idea of organising the Casablanca Chess Week?*

Tarik Senhaji: We started the Morocco Chess Week as a popular chess festival in 2022, aimed at engaging the wider public through a variety of activities such as conferences, chess in the park, and community outreach. However, the international tournament was not part of the package.

The idea of an international tournament was always a separate concept for us, closely intertwined with the development of the new chess variant: the Casablanca Variant.

BCM: How did you come up with the Casablanca Variation?

T.S: This is an idea we've been sitting on for some time. Myself and GM Hicham Hamdouchi started thinking about it after the Caruana – Carlsen world championship in 2018, when the chess world had existential debates about what we could do to avoid so many draws, take super GMs out of prep, encourage fighting chess.

One of the alternatives was chess960. Having watched a few games, I found that it was difficult for me to have intuition about the starting positions and it seemed to be the same for the super GMs. They would spend the first moves manoeuvring and re-arranging the pieces in order to get into "chessy" positions. With that observation, we thought it would be more natural to give them "chessy" positions to start with, that could be even nicer and more natural to the public as well!

BCM: What is the idea behind the Casablanca Variant concept?

T. S: The Casablanca Variant aims to inject new life into competitive chess by starting games from carefully selected mid-game positions that offer equal chances for both players while being rich in strategic possibilities. This approach not only encourages creativity and fighting spirit but also aims to keep both players and spectators more engaged.

That's how we theorized the Casablanca variant: provide the players with a "chessy" starting position, played before or completely imagined.

BCM: Where did the idea to organise a tournament by starting from historical positions come from?

T. S: I learnt that in business, introducing innovations and getting people's buy-in is just as crucial as devising the innovation itself. With that in mind, we understood the importance of launching the new Casablanca Variant with the right support and credibility. Chess enthusiasts are deeply committed to the history and traditional format of the game, so it was crucial to approach this innovation thoughtfully.

When we began discussions with FIDE about hosting the FIDE100 celebrations, it felt like a perfect opportunity. By selecting positions from historical World Championship games, we aligned our variant with the spirit of FIDE100. This approach not only honoured the rich history of chess but also provided us with the support needed to invite some of the world's top players.

The final line-up for our tournament exceeded our wildest dreams: Magnus Carlsen, Hikaru Nakamura, Vishy Anand, and Bassem Amin—arguably the best players from each continent. This exceptional gathering of talent underscores the potential and excitement of the Casablanca Variant and validates a priori its credibility.

BCM: How popular is chess in Morocco?

T.S: Before this tournament, I would have said chess is pretty popular, but now I have upgraded that assessment: chess is very popular in Morocco! The overwhelming turnout at the park for the FIDE100 celebrations and at the tournament venue speaks volumes about the game's widespread appeal.

The game has certainly faced challenges, especially with issues within the national chess federation. The government made the decisive move a few months ago to remove the former head, appoint a new temporary commission, and call for new elections. We are very grateful for this decision—drastic measures needed to be taken. This should allow to elevate the competitive side of Moroccan chess to match the enthusiasm and participation it enjoys on the amateur side.

Bringing world-class champions to play in the Casablanca Chess Tournament provides an additional boost. Their presence not only elevates the tournament's prestige but also inspires our local players and fans, further cementing chess's popularity and importance in Morocco.

BCM: What are your future plans?

T.S: First, we need to take stock: the feedback from the players and the public has been overwhelmingly positive so far, but we will continue to gather feedback to identify areas for improvement. The Casablanca Variant has achieved many of the goals we believed in, but there were also a few great surprises.

BCM: Such as?

T.S: For example, the public voting for the starting position garnered incredible participation, never seen before! It validates the potential engagement you can get from the public;

- players approach: being up close to the players I was pleasantly surprised by the amount of intuition and skill they used. I really felt that the Casablanca Variant in chess parallels the challenges Formula 1 drivers face when racing in the rain. Just as rain negates the advantage of a better engine in F1 and demands pure driving skill, this chess variant reduces considerably the benefit of deep opening preparation. Players had to rely on their intuition, creativity, and strategic understanding.

Looking ahead, there are already two key areas we will work on. One is expanding the Universe of potential games: We plan to open the universe of potential games considered to any game played or imagined, rather than limiting ourselves to world championship games. This will provide a broader and richer pool of starting positions, enhancing the variety and creativity of the tournament.

The other is valuing the role of the "Board Masters": This year, GM Hicham Hamdouchi and GM Laurent Fressinet selected the starting positions, ensuring they were rich and balanced. Their insights went beyond computer evaluation. We hope to further highlight their analysis next year.

In any case, the Casablanca Variant has proven to be a refreshing twist on traditional chess, back to the future as we like to call it (!), emphasizing intuition, creativity, and strategic understanding. I hope we'll get the opportunity to continue to develop it and get the chess fans on board!

CHESS AS AN ECOSYSTEM: AN INITIAL EXPLORATION

By Peter O'Brien

Once a pastime for the elite, chess has evolved into a bustling ecosystem reflecting societal shifts and shaping new paradigms

The notion of an ecosystem has been around for a long time. But in recent years, the term has been applied to just about anything and everything. From something that in its origins was mostly employed as a broad tool for examining natural environments, it has been transformed into a way of describing interactions of all sorts, and of “testing” how good the entities involved really are at making the most of those interactions.

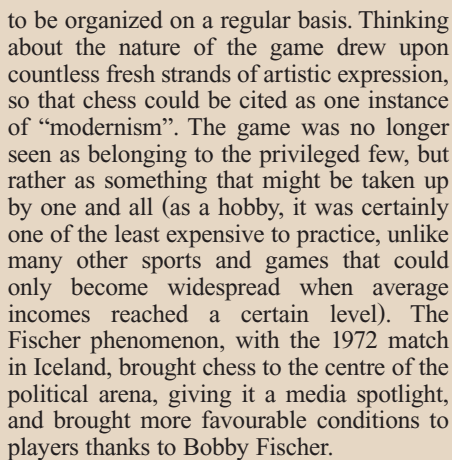
Since chess, within the past five years, has undergone multiple tsunamis of change, surely it's the moment to ask ourselves: what does the chess ecosystem (CES) look like today? And how does today's picture/moving panorama differ from the past? What are the implications of our grasp of today's CES, and what might tomorrow hold? These questions are huge and invite a whole range of responses. The notes that follow are therefore necessarily tentative and reflect my personal views. They make no pretense of being comprehensive. Instead, they are an invitation to readers to ask themselves how they see chess in relation to so many other aspects of life, and what lessons (if any) do they draw from their assessment. For me, this exploration is a logical consequence of what I (and valued colleagues) have been seeking to set out in the BCM this decade. We have looked at chess and business, chess and art, chess and war, chess in history, to name but a few. Let's take a glance at the whole canvas and try and locate things more precisely.

I'll start with the past. Not the dim and distant, but initially the period from the

European Renaissance till the post 1918 period. To paint with a large brush on a broad canvas, it seems fair to say that chess was played and viewed in highly limited contexts. It was a pastime for extremely restricted (and mainly well off) groups in societies; the geographic areas where it flourished were likewise extremely restricted; and the game was thought to have few links with other things, except perhaps war and diplomacy. Where it was depicted in paintings, that depiction was in the company of political rulers and the chessboard was to be interpreted as another symbol of the skills of the ruler. It did, in the European context, qualify as the game which was the most intellectually challenging - but that was because Go was scarcely known in Europe at that time. Artisanal attributes which could create beautiful chess pieces were valued, as they had been in far earlier times in Asia. Yet none of this took things very far. As far as the characteristics of players were concerned, the principal conclusion seems to have been that the game might promote obsessional and “strange” behavior among some of its leading exponents, and thus should be looked upon with some caution.

From around the end of World War One till, say, somewhere in the 1980s, a whole number of things altered. Professionalization for elite players became a genuine option. That implied that not insignificant sums of money came into the game. Rules and regulations were finally harmonized so that tournament and match play was conducted under more strict conditions. The Soviet “adoption” of the game as an instrument through which the superiority of a social system could be demonstrated did a great deal to enhance the growing internationalization of the game. Olympiads among competing nations began

From around the end of World War One till, say, somewhere in the 1980s, a whole number of things altered. Professionalization for elite players became a genuine option



kinds of places, and not just in magazines focused on chess. In short, chess ceased to be entirely backstage but instead began to appear in shards of the limelight.

There was one further, and exceptionally strong element, which radically altered the perception of chess in relation to the world. That was the pursuit, and eventual use, of the atomic bomb. Mathematics, physics and engineering had been making massive strides throughout the first half of the twentieth century. Taken together, these three extraordinary disciplines had come together to render the manufacture of the atomic bomb possible. John Von Neumann, the great mathematician, was apparently a very poor chess player but one who sensed that the creation of advanced algorithms could be much helped by figuring out how an algorithmic approach could be applied

From the Kasparov match almost 30 years ago, through the obligatory use of a personal computer by anyone who wants to play half-serious chess, through to Alpha Zero, chess is now part of the computer/informatics world

to chess. While this work was proceeding at Los Alamos, in the UK an enormous effort was being applied to the decoding of German war cyphers. Alongside the genius of Alan Turing, three players who can claim to be among the doyens of twentieth century English chess, namely Harry Golombek, Charles Hugh O'Donnell Alexander, and Stuart Milner-Barry, were hard at work in Bletchley sorting out the problems of Enigma. The highly prominent role of chess in these endeavors undoubtedly led to a far greater awareness of the significance of chess. It was now on the map.

If the above period was a kind of “coming out of the closet”, the years from around the 1980s till the onset of the present decade produced another tumult of change. There was a sharp generational shift. The top players themselves tended to be far younger than before. This in itself favored the spread of the game, especially in an epoch where major advances in visual communication meant that huge numbers of people could actually see who the players were. There was a geographic shift. While we were saying goodbye to Eastern Europe and the USSR, the older geographic bastions of the chess world were swiftly taking center stage. India and China started to make their presence felt, and not only in chess played by men. It's easy to forget that international tournaments were already being held in China by the early 1980s. At around the same time, post Maoist literature in Mandarin was taking a dramatic turn towards novels that had far more to do with the individual than with collectivist happenings. One of the key texts, published in 1984, was in fact called “The King of Chess”. It recounts the story of a man who dedicated himself to the game and earned

his living as an itinerant chess player. The novel demonstrates vividly how much knowledge of the game existed in China at that time. When, some years later, it became clear that the Chinese government was devoting significant resources to the promotion of the game (a campaign that has reached its zenith today, with both the Open and the Women's world titles in classical chess held by Chinese nationals), it needs to be remembered that there was, in fact, quite a large chess playing base on which to draw.

The reign of the computers arrived. From the Kasparov match almost 30 years ago, through the obligatory use of a personal computer by anyone who wants to play half-serious chess, through to Alpha Zero, chess is now part of the computer/informatics world. We have come full circle. Originally, it was chess that was influencing computer development. Now, its absolutely the opposite. It is striking to note that this does not seem to have constrained the growth of the game between humans - in fact, the contrary has occurred.

During the time up to the present decade, all sorts of interactions with the artistic world proceeded apace. In popular music, ABBA succeeded in making a musical called simply “Chess” a global hit. Many art exhibitions have employed chess themes as a major aspect of their presentations. Literature connected with chess has flourished, from thrillers through to biographies of players. Films have come out, usually linked with the lives of famous players. Moreover, thanks in no small part to the efforts of Kasparov himself, the use of chess in school curricula has expanded enormously. By 2020, the game had fully come of age.

Against this historical backdrop, this ever shifting perception of the chess eco system, it seems astonishing to say that the last 4 years have transformed perspectives even more dramatically. The signs stare us in the face. Online, chess is the thing.

Thanks to COVID, so much has gone into the wide open communications sphere that the game has taken on an utterly different character. Major personalities in the game are known primarily through their internet presence

Thanks to COVID, so much has gone into the wide open communications sphere that the game has taken on an utterly different character. Major personalities in the game are known primarily through their internet presence. Previously unheard of sums of money have poured into the game, allowing all kinds of people to make a living from chess without necessarily playing it very much. Results of major tournaments are commented upon instantaneously in the world's media. This total remake of the public image has been driven by the twin switches to chess at hyper fast speeds, and the willingness to experiment with rule changes, especially in the 960 direction. These are more than modifications to the game - what they do is generate far more excitement and uncertainty around results (even if Magnus almost always wins). My reading of chess today is that these two adrenaline boosting features, excitement and uncertainty, are what spectators (especially "neutral" ones) wish to experience. Predictability is out, anything being possible is in.

In the specific area of chess as a core component of the world of sport and games, I will take one example, namely the links between chess and soccer. Given that my knowledge of soccer far outstrips my knowledge of chess, I believe this is a case on which I can comment. The involvement of Carlsen in soccer is well known. Also quite well-known is the exceptional prowess of Carlsen's early trainer, Simen Agdestein, in both fields. Just yesterday I received a flyer of a new biography of Agdestein. The book promises to tell us much about this remarkable dual skill. Yet perhaps still more striking is the relatively recent podcast in which Josep

Guardiola, arguably the world's leading soccer manager, and Magnus discuss the links between soccer and chess. The subject is doubly fascinating since soccer is a team game whereas chess is not. Nevertheless, Guardiola at the end of the conversation expressed his genuine surprise concerning how much soccer could take from chess.

In the chess ecosystem of the 2020s, not all is rosy. We have seen the rather ugly disputes relating to allegations of cheating which are greatly facilitated by technological developments of recent years. The flirtation with non-fungible tokens (NFTs) as evidenced by their production for the two world championship qualifying tournaments in Berlin and the Belgrade tournament in 2022 seems to me unsavory. It is common knowledge that investments in NFTs are one of the countless methods of money laundering available in today's world, so caution is needed in any reinforcement of ties of this type. More generally, since funding for chess can now come from so many sources (just as it does for soccer), there is now an even greater imperative to keep the game clean.

That said, I would like to conclude these notes with a wonderfully positive extension of the chess ecosystem.

Just a few weeks ago, a Nigerian chess player finished an astounding 58-hour marathon of non-stop high level chess playing in Times Square, New York. But the best part is that the money collected through sponsoring is part of his magnificent effort to collect funds for the struggle against poverty in Africa. That very same subject occupies a significant chunk of my own time, so I admit to being biased. But it is a terrific example of how the game can be used to tackle major world problems. The previous record, by the way, was set in 2017 by Norwegian players. Come on Magnus, you can do this - why not add another string to your bow, recapture the record for Norway and along the way promote chess for humanity's good?

FAMOUS CHESS MASTERS WHO (ALMOST) ENDED UP BEHIND BARS

By Grandmaster
Raymond Keene OBE



Photo: David Liada

Garry Kasparov is in trouble with the (Russian) law yet again. An April report by *RFE/RL* (Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty), gives the following details:

“A court in Russia’s Komi region on April 24 issued an arrest warrant for Garry Kasparov, opposition politician and a co-founder of the Free Russia Forum, on a charge of creating and leading a “terrorist” group. The Syktyvkar City Court also issued arrest warrants for several other Russian opposition politicians and activists in exile on the same charge. Last month, Russia added Kasparov to its list of terrorists and extremists, an action generally used by the Kremlin to crack down on political opponents. Kasparov, a former world chess champion and an outspoken Kremlin critic, lives in the United States. *To read the original story by RFE/RL’s Siberia.*” (webpage report, April 25).



Wilhelm Steinitz; Source: Wikipedia

Since Kasparov is unlikely to be returning to Russian legal jurisdiction, unlike the brave, foolhardy but *late* Alexei Navalny, I doubt that he will be overly concerned by this judgement.

While on the topic of chess and the law, the story is told that one committee meeting of the British Chess Federation had to be cancelled because the group was iniquate. Mr Soanes turned up, but Mr Ritson-Morley was in jail for embezzlement, while Mr Stammwitz was being detained at the monarch’s pleasure for bigamy. Stammwitz’s feeble protestations at the trial of: “I forgot about the other one,” were predictably brushed aside.

I used to hold the belief that teaching chess in prisons was a good and worthy idea. A controlled regime of exercise ensures that the inmates of our jails are kept physically fit. It seemed, therefore, equally logical that improving the minds of those incarcerated, by the teaching and general encouragement of chess, would be a beneficial parallel.

Indeed, there are many examples of those imprisoned for political reasons turning to chess as a way of keeping their brains occupied, while they were out of circulation. A notable example was the former Prime Minister of Israel, Menachem Begin, who helped to keep his formidable mental powers in shape whilst jailed by the British Mandate regime in Palestine.

There are also cases of strong chess players in their own right finding themselves behind bars. For example, the two US International Masters, Norman Whitaker and Raymond Weinstein, were jailed respectively for confidence trickery and murder. The Yugoslav Grandmaster Milan Matulovic was sentenced to nine months for careless driving after a fatal car crash, while the two World Champions Wilhelm Steinitz and Bobby Fischer both found themselves under arrest for bizarre reasons. Steinitz was arrested and accused of spying when the moves of some of his correspondence games were intercepted. The authorities suspected that the moves were coded military secrets. The fact that

the word “Zug” in German, means both a “chess move” and a “train”, did not help!

Meanwhile, Bobby Fischer was arrested twice. For the first time, in Pasadena in May 1981, under suspicion of being a bank robber. The second occasion was in Japan, when Fischer was apprehended for breaching US sanctions against Yugoslavia, by playing against Boris Spassky in 1992. Fischer was only released on being granted Icelandic citizenship.

Other incarcerated chessplayers, including Alexandre Deschapelles, James Mortimer, Ludek Pachman, Alex Wojtkiewicz, Vladimir Petrov and most illustrious of all, Garry Kasparov, were all jailed for political dissidence or matters of principle.

Mortimer was, by profession, a dramatist and newspaper editor. The crime for which he was imprisoned was to refuse to reveal the name of an author of an article, which was the subject of a libel suit. While inside, Mortimer taught his fellow inmates how to play chess.

This is all well and good, but I have recently had occasion to reconsider my old thoughts on this entire matter of how best to handle “*each prisoner pent*” as WS Gilbert’s *Mikado* put it.

Surely, by insisting on physical exercise, we are helping to breed stronger and fitter criminals to be unleashed on our streets. While, by encouraging chess, or other mind games, we are assisting them to develop Moriarty-like cunning for their new forays, once released, against the law-abiding citizenry. As I have pointed out before, Sherlock Holmes (taking time off from his monograph on the *Polyphonic Motets of Lassus*) once remarked that prowess at chess was one mark of a scheming mind. Meanwhile, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe praised chess as the “touchstone of the intellect.”

This is important, since the figures for re-offending are serious. According to

Wellcome Research, recidivism rates are alarming, re-arrest at up to 60 per cent, re-conviction at up to 63 per cent and re-imprisonment 45 per cent.

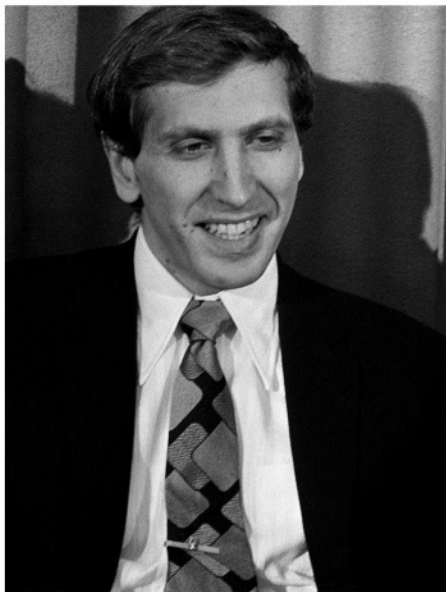
However, I may have found the answer! After much thought, and with profound apologies to my friends Carl Portman and Julian Simpole, both great advocates of teaching chess in prisons, I have come to a startling new conclusion, one which I am sure would have found approbation with that great theorist of social improvement, Dean Jonathan Swift.

There are, of course, impressive examples of prisoner rehabilitation, designed to successfully reintroduce inmates into society.

The International Chess Federation (FIDE) organises its Chess for Freedom project, organising tournaments for inmates and sharing success stories.

One might mention John Healy’s book *The Grass Arena*, which recounts the author’s path to redemption by becoming an accomplished chess player. There is also *The Clink Charity* that has set up first class restaurants to train prisoners in the arts of haute cuisine and silver service. Currently there are five such operations in H.M. prisons at Styal, Manchester, High Down, Cardiff and the 19th century old Governor’s House at [Brixton](#) and it is such bold and entrepreneurial visions that could make a real difference in reducing reoffending by training people in catering skills.

My Swiftian inspiration, though, prohibits chess and concentrates on food, though in a somewhat different manner from that advocated by The Clink Charity. My counter-suggestion is that the prison population should a) be deprived of all contact with chess and other mind-enhancing activities, and b) cut off from all forms of physical exercise and fed on an exclusive diet of cholesterol-forming, high calorie creamy cakes.



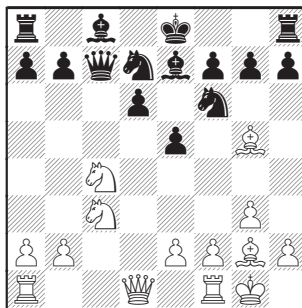
Bobby Fischer; Source: Wikipedia

Garry Kasparov vs Jan Timman

SWIFT Blitz, Brussels, 1987, rd. 9

1.d4 e6 2.g3 c5 3.♘g2 cxd4 4.♜f3 e5 5.0-0 d6 6.c3 dxc3 7.♞xc3 ♞f6 8.♞g5 ♞e7 9.♞d2 ♞bd7?! 9...O-O gives less away, according to Pancho, our friendly engine. 9...♞c6 is also alright.

10.♞c4 ♞c7?



This way, we will ensure that, instead of dangerously fit and intelligent malefactors being reintroduced into society, all potential recidivists would, in fact, become stunningly stupid, massively obese and constitutionally ill-equipped to run away successfully from any crime or outrage they might commit in the future. With a bit of luck, a swift getaway might even be impeded by their gigantic creamy cake induced girth, which would prevent criminals from squeezing into their (stolen) getaway cars. Lawbreakers, reduced to waddling pathetically from the scene of their crime, should make it relatively easy for our Myrmidons of the law to apprehend.

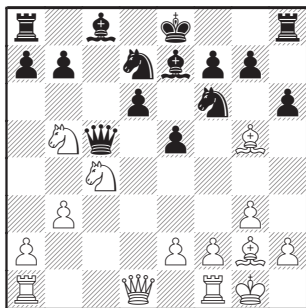
This month we will look at relatively unknown blitz wins by those two “notorious jailbirds”, Bobby Fischer and Garry Kasparov. The first is a forensic demolition by the great chess beast. The second features awesome commentary from the fugitive Fischer’s own notes.

This is a mistake, leaving White some quite aggressive continuations (see note to White’s next). Black was only slightly worse after, 10... h6 11.♞e3 ♞b6 12.♞xb6 axb6 13.♞b3 ♞a6 14.♞fd1 O-O 15. ♞xe5 ♞e6 16.♞c2 ♞c8.

11.b3?! The text move is a surprisingly lackadaisical method of neutralising the threat to the c4-knight, and cedes much of White’s initiative. The best way to proceed is: 11.♞c1 O-O (11... ♞b8 12.♞b5 O-O 13.♞cxd6 ♞xd6 14.♞xd6; Or 11... ♞xc4 12.♞xf6 ♞xf6 13. ♞d5) 12.♞b5 ♞d8 13.♞cxd6 h6 14.♞e3 ♞b6 15.♞xc8 ♞xc8 16.♞xd8 ♞fxd8 17.♞xa7 ♞xc1 18.♞xc1.

11...h6? A blunder that fails to deal with the primary threat of White’s next move. The best method is with: 11...♞b8 (11...a6 is also interesting) 12.♞d2 ♞b6 13.♞xf6 ♞xc4 14.bxc4 ♞xf6 15.♞ab1 O-O, when White can only boast a slight advantage.

12.♞b5 ♞c5??



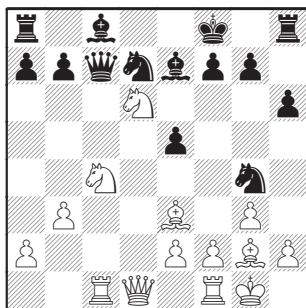
Black seems oblivious to the state of play, assuming a more positive posture than the position can afford. He was in serious trouble prior to the text; after it, he is seeking survival. Better options were:

A) 12...♖d8 13.♟cxd6+ ♜f8 14.♙e3 ♞b6 15.♞c1 g6 16.♞xc8 ♞xc8 17.♙xb7 ♞b8 18.♞xd8+ ♞xd8 19.♞fd1 ♜g7;

B) 12...♞b8 13.♟cxd6+ ♜f8 14.♙e3 ♞b6 15.♞c1 ♙e6 16.♙xb7 ♞bd5 17.♙xa8 ♞xa8 18.♞d3 ♙xd6 19.♞xd6 g5.

13.♞bxd6+!? Strong, but perhaps stronger still was: 13.♞cxd6+!! ♙xd6 14.♞xd6+ ♜e7 15.♞g5f5+ ♜f8 16.♙xf6 ♞xf6 17.♞d8+ ♞e8 18.♞ac1, when White has developed a winning position.

13...♜f8 14.♙e3 ♞c7 15.♞c1 ♞g4?



This move effectively administers the last rites over Black's devastated position. Wholly insufficient, but academically best, were:

A) 15...♞d8 16.♞xb7 ♙xb7 17.♙xb7 ♞b8 18.♙c6 Kg8 19.♞xa7 ♞a8 20.♙xa8 ♞xa8 21.♙e3 g6;

B) 15... h5 16.♞b6 ♞xb6 17.♞xc8+ ♞xc8 18.♙xb6 ♞xb6 19.♞xc8 ♞xc8.

16.♞d5 Black resigns 1-0 Black is teetering on the edge of destruction: after 16...♙xd6 17.♞xd6; how busted he is, becomes appallingly apparent, when the engine strips this bare:

A) 17...♞df6 18.♞xc7 ♞xd5 19.♞xf7+ ♜g8 20.♙xd5 ♜h7 21.♙e4+ ♜g8 22.♞c1 ♙e6 23.♞e7 ♞f6 24.♙xb7 ♞d8 25.♞xe6;

B) 17...♞b6 18.♞xc7 ♞xd5 19.♞xf7+ ♜g8 20.♙xd5 ♜h7 21.♙e4+ ♜g8 22.♞c1 ♙e6 23.♞e7 ♞f6 24.♙xb7 ♞b8 25.♞xe6.

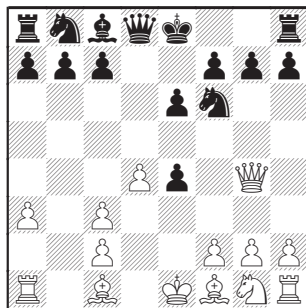
Robert James Fischer vs. Wolfgang Uhlmann

Herceg Novi blitz, 1970, rd. 9

Notes by Bobby Fischer

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♞c3 ♙b4 4.a3 I chose Alekhine's move in spite of the fact that 4.e5 was a safer move.

4...♙xc3+ 5.bxc3 dxe4 6.♞g4 ♞f6



Alekhine recommended 6...♜f8 but after 7.♞xe4, White has a big advantage.

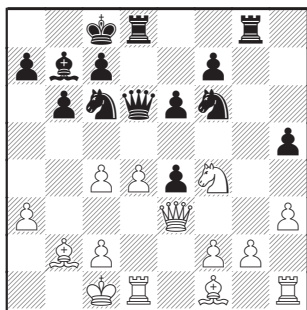
7.♞xg7 ♞g8 8.♞h6 ♞g6 Usually it is better to play this move later, eg 8...♞bd7

played Kovacevic against me at "Turnir mira" in Zagreb. I played 9. ♖e2 b6 10. ♙g5 ♜e7 threatening ... ♖g4, 11. ♜h4 ♙b7 with difficult play.

9. ♜e3 ♖c6 10. ♙b2 b6 At "Turnir mira" Zagreb, 1970, Uhlmann played 10... ♜d6 but after 11. O-O-O ♙d7 12. f3 White had a big advantage.

11.0-0-0 ♙b7 12.h3 h5 ? Weak move because the pawn at that place is vulnerable and it is loss of time but Black wanted to prevent g4.

13.c4 ♜d6 14. ♖e2 0-0-0 15. ♖f4 ♜gg8



If 15... e5 16. ♖xg6 exd4 White has many interesting possibilities the most sure is 17. ♖f4 dxe3 18. ♜xd6 ♜xd6 19. fxex3 h4 20. ♙e2 with a winning position in the endgame with two strong bishops.

16. ♙e2 ♜e7 If 16... ♖a5 which is more active, 17.g3.

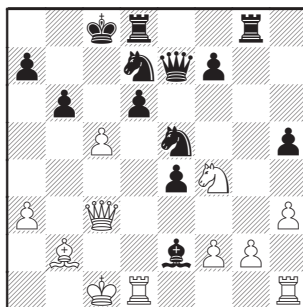
17.d5 exd5 18.cxd5 ♖e5 If 18... ♖a5 19. c4 ♙a6 20. ♜c3 with good play.

19.c4 ♙a6 20. ♜c3 ♖fd7 If 20... ♜ge8 21. ♖b1 and White is safe because on 21... ♜c5 White has many moves; Black's knight on f6 is under attack. Maybe also 22. ♜d4.

21.d6 !

21...cxd6 22.c5!!

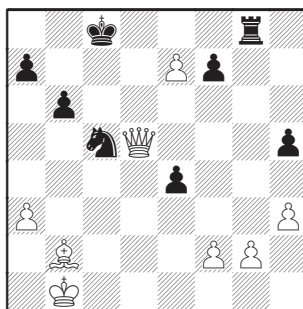
22...♙xe2??



Uhlmann was surprised by the last move and he made a mistake taking White's bishop on e2 - He had to play 22... ♖xc5 trying for compensation on the queenside. If 22... ♖c5 23. ♙xa6+ ♖b8 24. ♙b5: a) 24... ♖cd3+ 25. ♖xd3 ♜c8 26. ♖xe5 with a winning position;

b) 24...a6 25. ♙e2 ♜c8 26. ♖b1 ♖cd3 27. ♜d4 ♖xf4 28. ♙xa6 ♜c5 29. ♜xe4 with a probably winning position. Possible is also 27 ♖d5.

23.cxd6+ ♖c5 24.dxe7 ♜xd1+ 25. ♜xd1 ♙xd1 26. ♜xe5 ♙a4 27. ♖b1 ♙c6 28. ♖d5 ♙xd5 29. ♜xd5



Black resigns, 1-0

Ray's 206th book, "[Chess in the Year of the King](#)", written in collaboration with Adam Black, and his 207th, "[Napoleon and Goethe: The Touchstone of Genius](#)" (which discusses their relationship with chess) are available from Amazon and Blackwells.

Chess lovers invited to set Guinness world record

FIDE to celebrate centennial with record-breaking chess event. Everyone is invited to join!

Chess enthusiasts from every corner of the globe are invited to unite on 20th July in a groundbreaking event to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the International Chess Federation (FIDE) and International Chess Day

In an ambitious bid, FIDE aims to set a new Guinness World Record for the most chess games played in 24 hours, inviting participation from grandmasters to novices across various platforms and locations.

The record attempt will be meticulously coordinated across different time zones, starting at 00:00 CET and concluding at 24:00 CET, encompassing both over-the-board and online games.

FIDE is calling on all chess platforms and organisations to join the effort, whether by organising new events or incorporating existing ones into the record attempt.

The scope of the event is vast, allowing games to be played in various formats such as Standard, Rapid, and Blitz, with minimum time controls of three minutes plus 2 seconds per move or 5 minutes per game. Events must be supervised by a FIDE-licensed arbiter to ensure fairness and accuracy. This stringent oversight is crucial for maintaining the credibility of the record attempt.

Participants are encouraged to pre-register their events by 15 July 2024 to ensure their games are counted towards the record. Each game must adhere to specific regulations to validate its contribution, ensuring the integrity of the attempt.

FIDE's collaboration with Guinness World Records underscores the magnitude of this endeavour. Guinness World Records, originally known as the Guinness Book of Records, has evolved into the definitive authority on record-breaking achievements. This partnership blends the traditional culture of chess with modern digital integration, highlighting the sport's enduring appeal and adaptability.

This historic event is one of the highlights of FIDE's centennial celebrations, a year-long series of activities designed to engage a diverse audience, ranging from schoolchildren to refugees and from prison inmates to club players. The FIDE centennial torch relay has already made stops in India, Switzerland, Ghana, Canada and Colombia symbolising the global reach and inclusive spirit of the organisation. More countries are set to participate as the relay continues.

This initiative not only honours FIDE's rich history but also seeks to inspire a new generation of chess players, fostering a worldwide community united by their love for the game.

Other recent/current chess attempts at a Guinness record

FIDE isn't the only one aiming for a record in chess.

In April, Nigerian chess master Tunde Onakoya broke the record for the longest chess marathon, playing for 58 hours on New York's Time Square. His goal was to raise \$1 million for chess education for children. Supporters, including Afrobeats star Davido, cheered him on with music and Nigerian food. Viewers worldwide, including Nigerian officials, praised his resilience. Onakoya, who credits chess with changing his life, runs Chess in Slums Africa, helping educate children through chess. He also serves on the board of The Gift of Chess, aiming to distribute one million chess sets to underserved communities by 2030.



Tunde Onakoya; Source: Wikipedia

Now, Norwegian chess enthusiasts Askild Bryn and CM Odin Blikra Veia are set to break the Guinness world records for the Longest Chess Marathon by playing for 61 hours straight. Their attempt, scheduled for June 2-5 in Stavanger, Norway, coincides with the Norway Chess tournament. Both players, aged 37 and 40, have prepared intensively for this grueling challenge, which will involve over 300 blitz games with five-minute time controls.

This ambitious endeavour follows a rich history of marathon chess in Norway, including a notable but unapproved 1984 attempt by FM Joran Aulin-Jansson and the official 2018 record of 56 hours and 9 minutes set by FMs Sjur Ferkingstad and Hallvard Haug Flatebo. Bryn and Blikra Veia aim to surpass these records, combining their love for chess with extensive physical and mental preparation, including meditation and a 28-hour practice match.

In addition to the main event, FIDE's centennial celebrations feature a myriad of programmes aimed at both existing and new chess fans. These include educational initiatives for schoolchildren, outreach programmes for underserved communities, and special events for prisoners and charitable organisations. Through these efforts, FIDE aims to broaden the appeal of chess and make it accessible to all.

FIDE's centennial is not just a reflection on the past century of achievements but a forward-looking celebration that envisions the future of chess. The Guinness World Record attempt is a testament to the vibrancy and dynamism of the global chess community. By bringing together players from diverse backgrounds and skill levels, FIDE hopes to set a record and highlight chess's universal appeal.

For further details and registration, visit the official site at <https://100.fide.com/gwr/>.

How to take part in the FIDE Guinness world record event

	Over the Board	Online
Goal	Most number of chess games (both online and offline) to be played during one day (24 hours)	
Governing body	International Chess Federation (FIDE)	
Scope	Any OTB chess game played in an event preregistered to be counted as part of the GWR attempt.	Any online "compatible" chess game played on a preregistered platform according to the criteria valid for the GWR attempt.
Registration	Each OTB event has to be pre-registered by a National federation in advance on fide100.com/GWR not later than July 15th 2024.	Each online chess platform wishing to be included in the GWR attempt shall be pre-registered not later than July 15th 2024.
Date of play	July 20th 2024, The 24-hour period begins at 00:00 CEST and finishes at 24:00 CEST (Lausanne time) Eligible chess events may last several days, however only games played on July 20th 2024 (Lausanne time) may count in the attempt to make a Guinness World Record.	
Eligible games	All games of a round that actually started during the time frame are counted as valid – defaulted games are disregarded	All compatible games that were played (started and finished) within the time frame are counted as valid.
Format	Eligible chess events may last several days, however only games played on July 20th 2024 (Lausanne time)	
System of play	may count in the attempt to make a Guinness World Record.	Swiss system or round robin tournaments Arena or individual 'online rated' games, with a minimum number of 15 moves
Time control	Minimum 3 min. + 2 sec. increment per move, starting from move 1 (for games with increment) or 5 min. per game (for games without increment) Maximum 8 hours of play for the game according to the planned time control (based on 60 moves in case of increment)	
Pairings	Pairings shall be conducted by arbiter using a FIDE officially approved pairing program	Manually through challenges Computer generated in all other cases
Assessing results	The official arbiter of the event is responsible to confirm the number of games played and provide to FIDE a standard TRF file and sign a protocol confirming the number of games played. The arbiter must be registered at FIDE, have a title of International arbiter or FIDE arbiter; or be a FIDE licensed National Arbiter.	The online chess platform shall provide the statistics and relevant required information to justify the number of compatible games played.
Evidences	The National Chess Federation is responsible for overseeing each event, collecting evidence proving the facts mentioned in the protocol signed by arbiter.	Certify accuracy of data reported by the online chess platform.
Participants	Every human chess player (both FIDE registered and not registered players).	Every human chess player registered on the platform (anonymous not allowed). Games against computers are not counted.
FINAL protocol	Is a written statement confirming the number of chess games played both online and OTB signed by the Chairman of FIDE Arbiters commission and presented to GWR	
Deadline for reporting	All elements shall be submitted to FIDE and GWR after the end of the world record attempt period (21st July 2024 00:00:00 CEST).	

THE OVER-50 ENGLAND TEAM CROWNED CHAMPIONS:



ENGLAND'S SENIOR CHESS TEAMS TRIUMPH AT EUROPEAN CHAMPIONSHIPS

In a remarkable display of persistence and skill, England's senior chess teams captured triple gold at the 2024 European Senior Team Chess Championships held at the picturesque Terme Čatež in Slovenia

This prestigious event saw England's over-50 and over-65 teams overcoming formidable competition to achieve a clean sweep of titles.

The results are a continuation of England's great performance in recent years. In a way, it would seem that the bright moments of British chess are still coming from the previous generations than the current top players.

THE OVER-50s

The over-50 squad, comprising grandmasters John Emms, Glenn Flear, Keith Arkell, Nigel Davies, and Stuart Conquest, showed resilience and vigour by rebounding from an unexpected defeat to Montenegro in the second round (2.5:1.5). They then secured as many as five consecutive victories before a setback against Hungary in the penultimate round. In a dramatic final round, they triumphed over England 2, clinching the gold with a tie-breaking edge over Hungary and Italy.

Key performances included individual golds for Arkell and Conquest, a silver for Davies, and a bronze for Flear.

Notably, Conquest delivered the decisive blow against Italy with the ingenious tactic sealing a 2.5-1.5 victory.

The final standings for the over-50 section were as follows:

England 1 - 14/18 match points (gold)
Hungary - 14/18 match points (silver)
Italy - 14/18 match points (bronze)

Board medals in the over-50 section were awarded to:

Board 3:
Gold - GM Keith Arkell (England)
Board 4:
Silver - GM Nigel Davies (England)
Board 5/Reserve:
Gold - GM Stuart Conquest (England)
Board 2:
Bronze - GM Glenn Flear (England)



THE OVER-65 TEAM

The over-65 team, led by the reigning senior world champion John Nunn, demonstrated their dominance with an almost perfect score of 17/18 match points.

Nunn, whose expertise was on full display, finished with a sterling victory in the final round, employing a knight sacrifice to force a winning endgame.

The team, which also included Peter Large, Tony Kosten, Chris Baker, and Nigel Povah, stood unchallenged at the top, with Slovakia and Slovenia trailing behind.

Baker's performance earned him an individual gold, while Nunn, Large, and Povah secured silver medals.

The final standings for the over-65 section were as follows:

England 1 - 17/18 match points (gold)
Slovakia 1 - 15/18 match points (silver)
Slovenia 1 - 14/18 match points (bronze)

Board medals in the over-65 section were awarded to:

Board 1:
Silver - GM John Nunn (England)
Board 2:
Silver - Peter Large (England)
Board 3:
Gold - IM Chris Baker (England)
Board 5/Reserve:
Silver - IM Nigel Povah (England)

THE WOMEN'S TEAMS

England's success extended to the women's category where the 50+ team, comprising Sheila Jackson, Natasha Regan, Petra Fink-Nunn, Helen Frostick, and Susan Chadwick, won gold by competing against male teams, as they were the sole female entrants. This victory mirrors their triumph at last year's world 50+ championship where they finished ahead of the favourites, China.

THE PLAYING HALL



THE LEGENDARY UKRAINIAN PLAYER, REPRESENTING SLOVENIA FOR SOME TIME, ALEXANDER BELIAVSKY WAS THERE

The achievements of the English teams were supported by the generous £500k government grant for elite chess, provided by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport, and contributions from the Chess Trust. The funding enabled a strong contingent, including multiple teams, to participate in the championship.

With the European triumphs now behind them, the teams are setting their sights on the upcoming World Senior Championships in Kraków, Poland, from 1-12 July. The English squad, strengthened by these recent successes and led by world champions Michael Adams and John Nunn, aims to continue their rivalry with the United States, which has seen intense competition over the past two years.

The European Senior Team Chess Championships of 2024 will be remembered not just for England's victories but for the exemplary sportsmanship brilliant games. As more players from the Fischer boom generation reach eligibility, the competition promises to grow fiercer, marking an exciting era for senior chess.

BCM Staff

Photos: Luka Rifelj/European Chess Union

Note: IM Shaun Taulbut will analyse some of the outstanding games from the 2024 European Senior Team Chess Championships in the forthcoming July issue.



EUROPEAN SENIOR TEAM CHESS CHAMPIONSHIP 2024

Terme Čatež, Slovenia
6–16 May 2024



EUROPEAN SENIOR TEAM CHESS CHAMPIONSHIP 2024 - SECTION 50 + FINAL RANKING AFTER 9 ROUNDS

Rk	SNo	Team	Games	+	=	-	TB1	TB2	TB3
1	2	England 1	9	7	0	2	14	225.5	24
2	4	Hungary	9	6	2	1	14	206	21.5
3	1	Italy	9	6	2	1	14	203	22
4	3	Iceland	9	6	1	2	13	210.5	23
5	5	Montenegro 1	9	3	4	2	10	200.5	19.5
6	6	Slovakia 1	9	5	0	4	10	188	21.5
7	15	Slovenia - Kralj	9	4	2	3	10	110	18
8	7	Netherlands - LSG	9	4	1	4	9	178	20.5
9	11	Germany - SV Dinslaken 1923 e.V.	9	3	3	3	9	138	18.5
10	12	Scotland 1	9	4	1	4	9	125	17
11	19	Poland - Polish Amateurs	8	1	6	1	9	123	19
12	10	Denmark	9	4	1	4	9	117.5	16
13	17	Finland - Stadin Hemmot	8	4	0	4	9	84	17
14	8	England 2	9	3	2	4	8	152.5	17.5
15	14	Netherlands - Zuid Limburg	8	2	3	3	8	121.5	17
16	13	England 3	8	3	1	4	8	110.5	16.5
17	16	Czech republic - KHK	8	3	1	4	8	87	18
18	9	Austria 1	8	2	2	4	7	108	17.5
19	20	Monaco	8	2	0	6	5	43.5	10.5
20	18	England - women	8	0	2	6	3	67.5	12
21	21	Liechtenstein	8	0	2	6	3	65.5	11.5

EUROPEAN SENIOR TEAM CHESS CHAMPIONSHIP 2024 - SECTION 65 +
FINAL RANKING AFTER 9 ROUNDS

Rk	SNo	Team	Games	+	=	-	TB1	TB2	TB3
1	2	England 1	9	8	1	0	17	241	24.5
2	3	Slovakia 1	9	7	1	1	15	228.5	23.5
3	1	Slovenia 1	9	6	2	1	14	241	26
4	4	France 1	9	4	4	1	12	209.5	21
5	6	Germany	9	5	2	2	12	203.5	21.5
6	5	Finland 1	9	5	1	3	11	177	20.5
7	10	Sweden 1	9	5	1	3	11	175.5	19.5
8	12	Hungary 1	9	4	2	3	10	162.5	18
9	7	Croatia - SESVETE AGROPROTEINKA +65	9	5	0	4	10	153	19
10	15	Switzerland 11	9	4	2	3	10	146	20.5
11	20	Belgium	9	3	3	3	9	156.5	20
12	23	France - Normandie	9	2	5	2	9	140.5	18.5
13	19	Switzerland - SG Riehen	9	3	3	3	9	138.5	18.5
14	8	Montenegro 2	9	4	1	4	9	135	16.5
15	13	England 2	9	4	1	4	9	133.5	17
16	21	Austria 1	9	4	1	4	9	131	17.5
17	14	Kosovo	9	3	3	3	9	127	19
18	26	England 3	9	4	1	4	9	114	17.5
19	9	Israel 1	9	4	0	5	8	143	19.5
20	11	Germany - SC Kreuzberg	9	2	4	3	8	139.5	16.5
21	25	Scotland 2	8	3	1	4	8	120	19.5
22	17	Germany - Women	8	3	1	4	8	118	16.5
23	18	Sweden 2	9	4	0	5	8	103.5	18.5
24	22	Finland 2	9	2	3	4	7	101.5	16.5
25	24	Austria 2	8	2	2	4	7	99	15
26	16	Germany - SV Osnabrueck	8	3	0	5	7	85	18.5
27	28	Sweden 3	8	2	2	4	7	80.5	15
28	27	Finland 3 - TURKU	8	3	0	5	7	65	13.5
29	29	Slovenia - SD Slovenske Konjice	8	1	1	6	4	63.5	13
30	30	Finland 4	8	1	0	7	3	38.5	9.5
31	31	Croatia - Mursko Sredisce	8	1	0	7	3	33.5	8



THE NUMBERS THAT CONTROL US: THE PARADOXICAL IMPACT OF RATINGS ON PERFORMANCES

By GM Aleksandar Colovic; www.alexcolovic.com

WHEN A STRONGER PLAYER PLAYS
A WEAKER PLAYER ON A REGULAR
BASIS, THE STRENGTH OF THE
STRONGER PLAYER DECREASES
WHILE THE STRENGTH OF THE
WEAKER PLAYER INCREASES

Some time ago, I remember a young and promising GM "crying" on social media, in all seriousness, how the public cannot possibly understand the agonising pain of losing 20 rating points and dropping below 2600.

I wasn't sure whether to laugh or cry from such a deification of the rating numbers. And yet, for active players, the rating numbers control us.

Everybody is addicted to those numbers, to a bigger or lesser extent. Even Carlsen, who recently said he would like to remain number one with a solid advantage over the rest.

We are all trapped inside our own small circles, from the beginners who want to cross 1100 to the elite who want to cross 2800.

Let's mention again Carlsen, who not so long ago set himself the aim to cross 2900.

This slavery doesn't bring anything good. I remember I played my best chess when I didn't care about the rating. And yet, nowadays, it's all about the rating.

Perhaps, the worst thing about the rating is that we are judged by it. People see those numbers and immediately think they know you're a patzer or a strong player. They "know" whether you deserve respect or not. Which is definitely not how it should be.

When checking the results of the players I encountered frequently in the past, I noticed that without exception, they all lose or have already lost, a lot of rating. There are several reasons for this.

The first one is the broken rating system. FIDE, in their worldly wisdom, decreased the rating gain to zero(!) when playing players who have more than 400 rating points. So, an IM of 2400 can score 9/9 against players

rated 1900 and he will keep her rating. But God forbid should he make a draw – then she immediately loses around five points!

The second problem is that due to various factors, there are a lot of underrated players, especially the young ones. FIDE perhaps finally recognised the mistake and starting 1 March FIDE will reintroduce the 400-point rule to be valid for every game, resulting in 0.8 gain for the stronger player. So again, God forbid you have the bad luck of playing them in a tournament (say, a bunch of kids from India who did not have a chance to play abroad or against non-Indian players) – once you may win, but they will definitely get you in the next games and you can start posting agonising cries on social media like the GM mentioned at the beginning.

The most certain way not to lose rating is not to play. The once feared GM Korneev, who outrated me between 150-200 points for most of the time since the mid-90s, now is within 20 points of my rating. You play, you lose.

There is one group of players, though, who manage to play and not lose rating. It's the elite, who play among themselves. They draw most of the time, win some, and lose some, but when playing players with similar rating and you are around 50% most of the time, you don't lose rating. Proof of that was in Qatar recently where we saw the elite play with the "outsiders" and there were big shifts in results and rating changes (see my article about this in the November issue of BCM).

The elite is definitely stronger than the rest, but the case of the online tournaments where they often play lower-rated opposition shows what a lot of us have known – they cannot, *consistently*, maintain their rating when playing lower-rated players on a regular basis. There are countless examples of players like Carlsen, Nakamura, Caruana, Kramnik etc. losing or drawing players rated 2100 or lower. If those games were actually rated, they would have been writing agonising tweets mourning their ratings a long time ago. Or they would have stopped playing these events.

I can also give you an example from over-the-board play. While still a top-3 player, Kramnik played in the Qatar Masters Open in 2014. He played as expected, leading the event and only a loss in the last round to Yu Yangyi cost him first place. His next open was the same Qatar Masters the following year, when he played equally well, sharing third place.

But already in 2017, when playing in the Isle of Man Open, Kramnik (rated 2803 at the time) struggled, failing to beat Lawrence Trent (2427) and losing to James Tarjan (2412). The following year was similar, as he drew with Sundararajan (2445) and Kashlinskaya (2447).

This is a known phenomenon – when a stronger player plays a weaker player on a regular basis, the strength of the stronger player decreases while the strength of the weaker player increases. This is why the elite prefer to play among themselves – it keeps their rating and their status in the chess world intact.

These problems with the rating kill the enthusiasm of many players. They want to play, but they cannot win (rating). This leads to a lot of older players stopping active play, leaving only the young ones to massacre each other.

I outlined several issues with the rating, which I have observed, but I don't know the solution to these issues. FIDE recently announced that they are coming up with something, and pretty soon at that. FIDE, on their part, will introduce rating changes from 1 March, increasing the rating floor from 1000 to 1400 and increasing the ratings of all players below 2000. We will see how these changes affect the system.

Perhaps, there is no general solution, only an individual one. Each one of us should find the most appropriate way for him/herself not to be affected by the "magical" numbers so that (s)he can give their best on the chessboard. Eventually, that should be all that matters.



IS CHESS A SPECTATOR SPORT?

If chess players are taking half an hour to make some moves, how can you honestly enjoy watching it live?

By GM Aleksandar Colovic; www.alexcolovic.com

Photo: David Llada

The question on whether chess is interesting to watch given that players take a long time between moves is the core problem with chess becoming a spectator sport. Of course, I'm talking here about classical chess, not rapid or blitz, which are more easily "sold" as we have seen in recent years, with a huge rise in the number of rapid and blitz events.

The answer to the question from the subheading is: you don't. Unless you're a strong chess player yourself **and** have the time to immerse yourself in the game in progress. The key word here is the conjunction "and". Because, in order to be appreciated, chess must be understood and that understanding requires the time to put in the effort.

The main issue that prevents the "casual player" from enjoying chess is a lack of chess understanding. This is a problem because the true excitement in chess (unless

it's a flashy sacrifice) lies behind the moves that are played. The moves played are just the tip of the iceberg, therefore spectators only see a movement of a hand. That is hardly an action-packed sequence.

Another hugely interesting aspect of a chess game is the whole process the players go through before sitting at the board - the preparation for the game. There are so many intricacies in the preparation that it's a whole new (and well-hidden!) world. But only the chess player and his/her team would know of them, so the rest of us can only make educated guesses.

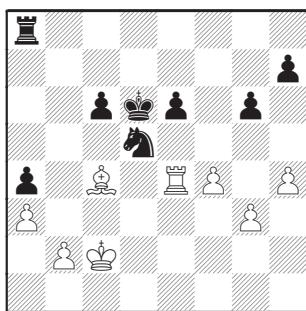
For me personally, this aspect of trying to get into the heads of the players and to understand their opening choices is one that gives me huge pleasure. I will not talk about this aspect now, as you could have seen some of it in my comments to the games, especially the 2018 World Championship Match.

I would like to illustrate the common “boredom” people complain about. In order to do this I’d ask you first to play over the following moves as if watching it live. Or even after the game finished, but without too much of a thought.

**Isaac Boleslavsky -
Boris Petrovich Goldenov**

USSR Championship Moscow URS (13),
17.12.1952

1.e4 c6 2.♘c3 d5 3.d4 dxe4 4.♘xe4 ♟f6
5.♘g3 e5 6.♟f3 exd4 7.♘xd4 ♙c5 8.♞c2+
♙e7 9.♙e3 ♞d5 10.♞c4 ♞e5 11.0-0-0 ♘d5
12.♘f3 ♞e6 13.♙d2 b5 14.♞d4 ♙f6 15.♞e4
0-0 16.♙d3 ♞xe4 17.♘xe4 ♙e7 18.♞he1
♘a6 19.♘c3 ♘ac7 20.♘xd5 ♘xd5 21.♙e4
♙e6 22.♘d4 ♙c5 23.♘xe6 fxe6 24.f4 a5
25.g3 a4 26.a3 ♞ab8 27.c3 ♞bd8 28.♙g2
♞d6 29.♙h3 ♘c7 30.♙e3 ♙xe3+ 31.♞xe3
♞xd1+ 32.♘xd1 ♘f7 33.♘c2 g6 34.♞e5
♘e7 35.♙f1 ♘d6 36.c4 bxc4 37.♙xc4
♘d5 38.h4 ♞g8 39.♞e4 ♞a8 40.♙e2 ♘e7
41.♞d4+ ♘d5 42.♞e4 ♘e7 43.♙c4 ♘d5



44.♞e5 ♞b8 45.♙d3 ♞g8 46.♘c1 c5 47.♙c4
♞a8 48.♞e4 ♞a7 49.♞e2 ♞b7 50.♘c2 ♞c7
51.♙b5 ♞a7 52.♞d2 ♘e7 53.♞e2 ♘d6 54.♞e4
♘b6 55.♙f1 ♘d5 56.♙h3 ♘c7 57.♙g4 ♞a8
58.♘c1 ♞a7 59.♙d1 ♘b5 60.♙xa4 ♘d4
61.♙d1 ♘f5 62.♙g4 ♞b7 63.♙xf5 exf5
64.♞e3 ♘d5 65.♘c2 c4 66.♞e5+ ♘d6 67.a4
♞b3 68.a5 ♞xg3 69.a6 ♘c7 70.♞b5 ♞g1
71.♞b7+ ♘c6 72.♞xh7 ♞a1 73.♞g7

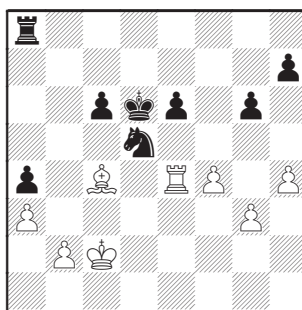
So what did you see? Just some senseless to-ing and fro-ing and then somehow White made some progress. Honestly, without pausing to understand the moves even I would have no idea what happened and how White achieved something. In short: no sacrifices, no flashy moves, and boring stuff.

Now I would like to offer a new perspective of the fragment above.

**Isaak Boleslavsky -
Boris Petrovich Goldenov**

URS-ch20 Final Moscow (13), 17.12.1952

The position after 43...♘d5.



44.♞e5 Black has some weaknesses, like a4, c6, e6, but they are well-defended. With this move White is trying to push h5 and weaken Black’s kingside pawns.

44...♞b8 Black realises that h5 is still not a threat and puts the rook on the b-file in order to come to b3 if possible.

45.♙d3 White removes the bishop from the c4-square where it could be attacked from e3 (as we saw in the above line) and perhaps threatens h5 now.

45.h5 is still not a threat because after 45...gxh5 46.♞xh5 ♘e3+ is the unpleasant check for White, which solves all Black’s problems.

1-0

45...g8 Black decides to play a passive prophylactic move against h5. Perhaps he missed the active idea of 47...c5 in the line below.

45...b3 was entirely possible, though more dynamic. The point is that after 46.h5 gxh5 47.xh5 Black now has the move 47...c5!

46.e1 A multi-purpose move - White removes the king from the possible check on e3 and liberates the c2-square for the bishop from where it can attack the a4-pawn.

46...c5?! An inappropriate moment to loosen the central structure. Black had the strong ...e7-f5 maneuver at his disposal.

46...e7 with the idea of 47.c2 (47.g5 is better, but after 47...a8 and then ...h6 Black should be able to hold, though White will continue maneuvering.) 47...f5 reminds White that he also has a weakness, the pawn on g3.

47.c4 The bishop returns to c4, stabilising the position. A possible idea for White is to push b3 in order to obtain a passed pawn. White's advantage is permanent, so as long as he is careful not to allow some concrete and dynamic counterplay he can make solid moves and wait for inaccuracies on Black's part.

47...a8 Black defends a4 in advance and prevents b3.

48.e4 This move eyes the a4-pawn and creates the threat of b5. Even though Black can easily defend against it (by ...b6) it is a move with an idea and Black needs to think about it. This is a psychological aspect of playing a position with a stable advantage where a direct breakthrough isn't visible. By facing semi-threats or even virtual ones the opponent is feeling the pressure and sooner or later cracks.

48...a7 For now Black waits. He understands that b5 can easily be parried so he marks time.

49.e2 Another useful move with the vague idea of perhaps pushing h5 and playing h2. Another idea is to pin the knight on d5 by playing d2, though that doesn't bring much. But let Black worry about that.

49...b7 The rook comes to the open file and prevents b5. Black still waits.

50.e2 The king moves forward and again the idea of b3 is possible.

50...c7 A nice prophylactic move against b3.

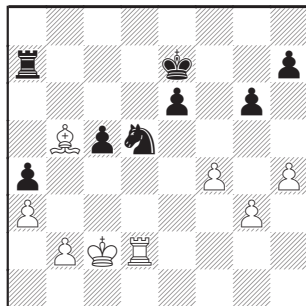
51.b5 Forcing Black to go back to a7.

b3 doesn't work in view of 51...axb3+ 52.xb3 (52...xb3 c4! shows the idea behind Black's 50... c7.) 52...b7+ 53.c2 a7 and Black forces a repetition.

51...a7 52.d2 White prepares b3, but to prepare it like this White had to see what was wrong with the immediate 52 b3.

52.b3 would have been desirable, but Black has a defence: 52...axb3+ 53.xb3 b7 54.c4 This would have been great for White if it wasn't for 54...xb5! and White suffers because of the position of the rook on e2. Now we understand the game move.

52...e7?



Black finally cracks and errs.

52...♖a5! chasing the bishop from b5 would have continued to offer stiff resistance. 53.♙c4 ♖a7 and the game continues.

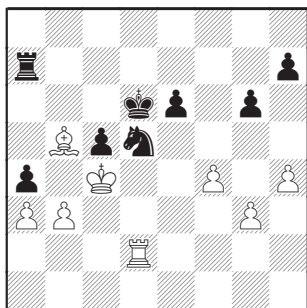
53.♔d3! White uses the moment to advance with the king. Here we depart from the actual moves of the game (where White repeated with 53.♖e2 ♔d6 and then went 54.♖e4) as the king's advance was stronger and it would have crowned White's patient maneuvering.

53...♘b6 Preventing ♔c4.

54.♔c3 White improved the position of his king while he worsened the position of Black's knight. If now

54...♘d5+ Then after:

55.♙c4 ♔d6 56.b3!



White finally manages to obtain a passed pawn with a big advantage.

This means that the casual player's only chance is to have high-level commentators doing this work for him/her. Not all commentators are created equal and they really need to have a feel for how to present the iceberg underneath the tip. Only then does chess have a distant chance of becoming a spectator sport, though even then only for a selected audience.

Going back to the question at the beginning. What to do for half an hour when a player is thinking? In such situations, it is up to the commentators to try to delve into the position deeply. After all, if a strong player spends so much time then there must be something in the position that is worth that time! The commentators should understand what that is and then explain it to the audience.

Chess is not a visual sport, the pleasure from watching chess comes from the joy of understanding ideas. It is an intellectual pleasure and as such it depends less on the visual and more on the hidden.

Botvinnik liked to say that chess is a combination of sport, art and science. While it is impossible to compete with the visual attraction of football or basketball, the watching of chess should develop in the direction of explanation of the hidden.

That is where the art and science are concealed.

1-0

This is quite different, isn't it? It shows all the action behind the moves, the ideas, and, often, the psychological moments. But in order to unearth all this you really need to understand chess at a relatively high level and to want to spend the time to understand the actual moves.



HOW TO USE CHESS ENGINES MORE EFFICIENTLY

THE REVERSE PROCEDURE!

Correspondence chess players have vast experience in setting, running and overall working with chess engines. Over the years Jon Edwards has established his own method that helped him win some important games and not only become World Correspondence Champion, but also able to find some crucial theoretical novelties.

BY JON EDWARDS

Most chess players approach the use of chess engines in the same way. Put a key position on the board (for correspondence players the current position in an ongoing game) and let the engine run and run and run. The more powerful the processor, the deeper and presumably more accurate the output. If you are ever outplayed in correspondence chess, you may simply conclude that your opponent must have been using a faster processor.

I am confident that the approach described just above is not the best practice and the decision-making process involved is sub-optimal. I would like to describe what I have come to believe is a far-better practice for the use of engines. It is the method that I have used to compete effectively throughout the ICCF World Championship cycle. I am not so presumptuous as to believe that what I describe here is the best possible practice. But it has served me well.

First, make no mistake, having machines with powerful processors does help with everything I am about to describe. But I also believe that the method here is more important than the strength of your processor. The engine that you decide to use is important, of course, but the correct use of engines is far more important even than the choice of the engine itself.

We begin, quite naturally, by running the engine conventionally in the current position. Perhaps you have just received a move from an opponent, or perhaps many of you are intensely interested in searching for new ideas in key positions within your opening repertoire.

Within ChessBase, load (and lock) your engine. Assuming that there is a meaningful choice to

investigate, be sure to display multiple lines at the same time. You can adjust the number of lines being analyzed by pressing the “+” and “-” boxes in the menu displayed below. I like to adjust the number of lines being examined to reflect what I judge to be the number of meaningful candidate-moves in each position.

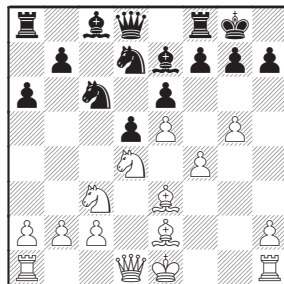
See image 01

The above image summarizes the nature of the engine run. The engine is locked and I have adjusted the clock to run at 20 CPU, somewhat lower than my computer's capacity of 32 CPUs. I normally lower the clock speed to avoid any possible overheating, and throughout the runs, I monitor the CPU temperature of my computers to make sure that they are operating below 90 degrees C. You ignore heat monitoring at your own peril.

The following diagram is from my game against Lobanov in the 2017 Spanish Masters with White to play after 11...♘c6, which was deeply analyzed in American Chess Magazine #31, pp.11–12.

Jon Edwards - Evgeny Lobanov

Spanish Masters, 2017-2019





Kibitzer: Stockfish 16

IMAGE 01

Stockfish 1 20 CPUs
 ± 0.33 Depth=43 12.h4 (8/43) 20964 kN/s

Kibitzer: Stockfish 16

IMAGE 02

Stockfish 16 20 CPUs
 ± 0.52 Depth=32 12.h4 (1/43) 22692 kN/s
 -0.15 12...Qb6 13.Nxc6 Qxc6 14.Rg1 Rd8 15.Qd4 b6
 0.01 12...Nc5 13.Nxc6 bxc6 14.b4 Nd4 15.Nxd4 dxe4 16.Qxd4
 depth=6, Time=0.7s Line=1

1. ± (0.52): 12.h4 Qb6 13.a3 Bc5 14.Na4 Qa5+ 15.c3 Bxd4 16.Bxd4 b5 17.Nc5 Nxd4 18.Qxd4 Nxc5 19.Qxc5 Qa4 20.Qf2 B
 2. ± (0.47): 12.a3 Qc7 13.h4 b5 14.Bd3 Nc5 15.h5 b4 16.axb4 Nxd3+ 17.Qxd3 Nxb4 18.Qd2 Bd7 19.h6 g6 20.0-0 a5 21.R
 3. ± (0.46): 12.Bd3 Qb6 13.Na4 Qa5+ 14.c3 Ndx5 15.fxe5 Nxe5 16.Bc2 Nc4 17.Qd3 g6 18.b3 Nxe3 19.Qxe3 Bd7 20.b4 C
 4. = (0.29): 12.Rg1 Nxd4 13.Bxd4 b5 14.Bd3 g6 15.Qf3 Bc5 16.Ne2 b4 17.h4 Qb6 18.Qe3 a5 19.h5 Ba6 20.Rh1 Rf8 21.Kd
 5. = (0.24): 12.0-0 Bc5 13.Rf2 Qc7 14.Qd2 Nxd4 15.Bxd4 b5 16.a3 Bb7 17.Bf1 Qb6 18.Bxc5 Nxc5 19.Qd4 Qc7 20.Bd3 Ne4
 6. = (0.12): 12.a4 Bc5 13.Qd2 Qa5 14.Nxc6 bxc6 15.Bxc5 Nxc5 16.b3 Rb8 17.h4 Rxb3 18.cxb3 Nxb3 19.Qb2 Nxa1 20.0-0

White is slightly better. Double attack on a4/e1 (14...Qa5+), Exchange NNB for NNB (with 15...Bxd4).

Kibitzer: Stockfish 16

IMAGE 03

Stockfish 1 20 CPUs
 ± 0.39 Depth=40/71 12.a3 (3/43) 21325 kN/s
 0.33 13.h4 Nc5 14.Qd2 Bd7 15.0-0-0 Nxd4 16.Bxd4 Ne4 17
 0.26 13.Qd2 Nxd4 14.Bxd4 Nb6 15.b3 Nd7 16.h4 Nc5 17
 depth=16, Time=1.7s Line=2

1. ± (0.39): 12.h4 Nxd4 13.Bxd4 b5 14.Bd3 Nc5 15.Qg4 Nxd3+ (or 15...Qa5) 16.cxd3 b4 17.Ne2 Qa5 18.b3 Qb5 19.Qg3
 2. = (0.21): 12.Bd3 Qb6 13.Na4 Qa5+ (or 13...Qc7) 14.c3 Nxe5 15.fxe5 Nxe5 16.Bc2 Nc4 17.Qd3 g6 18.b3 Nxe3 19.Qx
 3. ± (0.31): 12.a3 Qc7 (or 12...Nb6) 13.h4 (or 13.Qd2) b5 14.Bd3 Nxd4 15.Bxd4 b4 16.axb4 Bxb4 17.Qh5 g6 18.Qg4 Bc5
 4. = (0.25): 12.Bf2 Bb4 13.h4 Ne7 14.Rh3 Nc5 15.a3 Bxc3+ 16.Rxc3 Ne4 17.Rf3 Bd7 18.Bd3 Qa5+ 19.c3 Ba4 20.Qc1 Rac8
 5. = (0.19): 12.a4 Bc5 13.Qd2 (or 13.Nxc6) Qa5 14.Nxc6 bxc6 15.Bxc5 Nxc5 16.b3 Rb8 17.h4 Rxb3 18.cxb3 Nxb3 19.Qb2 I
 6. = (0.12): 12.0-0 Bc5 13.Rf2 Qc7 (or 13...Qe7) 14.Qd2 Nxd4 15.Bxd4 b5 16.a3 Bb7 17.Bf1 Bxd4 18.Qxd4 Nc5 19.Rf3 Ne4

White is slightly better. Exchange N for N (with 12...Nxd4), Black gets the bishop pair (15...Nxd3+).

Kibitzer: Stockfish 16

IMAGE 04

Stockfish 1 20 CPUs
 ± 0.33 Depth=42/74 12.a4 (25/43) 21027 kN/s
 0.79 14.h5 Bb7 15.h6 g6 16.Qd2 Nb6 17.0-0-0 Nc4 18.Bx
 0.43 14.Nxc6 Qxc6 15.h5 Rb8 16.h6 g6 17.Bd4 b4 18.axb
 depth=17, Time=9.3s Line=1

1. ± (0.33): 12.a3 Qc7 13.h4 (or 13.Qd2) b5 14.Bd3 Nxd4 (or 14...Nc5) 15.Bxd4 b4 16.axb4 Bxb4 17.Qh5 g6 18.Qf3 Bc
 2. = (0.28): 12.h4 Nxd4 13.Bxd4 b5 14.Bd3 Nc5 15.Qe2 Qa5 16.Kf2 b4 17.Nd1 Bd7 18.Ne3 Bb5 19.Qd2 Rfc8 20.Kg3 Rc7
 3. = (0.28): 12.Bd3 Qb6 13.Na4 (or 13.Rb1) Qa5+ 14.c3 Nxe5 15.fxe5 Nxe5 16.Bc2 Nc4 17.Qd3 g6 18.b3 Nxe3 1
 4. = (0.21): 12.Bf2 Qb6 13.Nb3 Bc5 14.Nxc5 Nxc5 15.0-0 d4 16.Bf3 dxc3 17.Qd6 Rd8 18.Qxc5 Qxc5 19.Bxc5 cxb2 20.Ra1
 5. = (0.14): 12.0-0 Bc5 13.Rf2 Nxd4 14.Bxd4 b5 15.Bxc5 Nxc5 16.Qd4 Qc7 17.a3 Bb7 18.Rf3 Rac8 19.Bd3 Qe7 20.Rh3 N
 6. = (0.09): 12.a4 Qa5 13.Qd2 Bc5 14.Nxc6 bxc6 15.Bxc5 Nxc5 16.b3 Rb8 17.h4 Rxb3 18.cxb3 Nxb3 19.Qb2 Nxa1 20.0-0

White is slightly better. Exchange N for N (with 14...Nxd4), 16...Bxb4 pins the knight on c3, White threatens mate (17.Qh5).

The position in the diagram is identical to the one reached in 2018 between Anand and Artemiev, a game in which White played 12.♔d2. As will be evident from the four runs that below, the engine, in this case Stockfish 16, does not provide consistent clarity or usefully confirm that 12.♔d3!! is the best move.

See images 02, 03, 04, 05

By right-clicking upon the notation in this engine window, ChessBase will permit you to save individual lines, or all lines, to the game's notation. I regularly save all relevant data.



IMAGE 05

Kibitzer: Stockfish 16

Stockfish 1 20 CPUs 0.08 13...Nc5 14.Qd2 Bd7 15.0-0-0 Nxd4 16.Qxd4 a5 0.24 13...Re8 14.Qd2 Nc5 15.0-0-0 Nxd4 16.Bxd4 Bd7 depth=6, Time=2.4s Line=4

± 0.37 Depth=44/81 12.Bf2 (8/43) 20739 kN/s

1. ± (0.37): 12.Bd3 Qb6 13.Na4 (or 13.Rb1) Qa5+ 14.c3 Nxe5 15.fxe5 Nxe5 16.Bc2 Nc4 17.Bf2 Bd7 18.b4 Qd8 19.h4
 2. ± (0.36): 12.h4 Nxd4 13.Bxd4 b5 14.Bd3 Nc5 15.Ne2 a5 16.Ng3 Nxd3+ 17.cxd3 Ba6 18.0-0 g6 19.h5 b4 20.h6 a4 21.
 3. = (0.25): 12.a3 Qc7 13.h4 (or 13.Qd2) b5 14.Bd3 Nxd4 (or 14...Nc5) 15.Bxd4 b4 16.axb4 Bxb4 17.Qh5 g6 18.Qe2 Bc8
 4. = (0.19): 12.a4 Bc5 13.Qd2 Qa5 14.Nxc6 bxc6 15.Bxc5 Nxc5 16.b3 Rb8 17.h4 Rxb3 18.cxb3 Nxb3 19.Qb2 Nxa1 20.0-0
 5. = (0.09): 12.Bf2 Qb6 13.Nb3 Bc5 14.Nxc5 Nxc5 15.0-0 d4 16.Bf3 dxc3 17.Qd6 Rd8 18.Qxc5 Qxc5 19.Bxc5 cxb2 20.Rb1
 6. = (0.01): 12.Qd3 Qc7 13.0-0-0 Nc5 (or 13...b5) 14.Qd2 Bd7 15.Bf3 b5 16.Nce2 b4 17.Nxc6 Bxc6 18.Nd4 a5 19.Kb1 a4 2

White is slightly better. Double attack on b2/d4 (12...Qb6), Black sacrifices a knight (N vs PP) (14...Nxe5), 14...Nxe5 is a sac, Black gets a covered passed pawn on e6 (15...Nxe5).

IMAGE 06

Stockfish 16: 6) 12.0-0 Bc5 13.Rf2 Qc7 14.Qd2 Nxd4 15.Bxd4 b5 16.a3 Bb7 17.Bf1 Bxd4 18.Qxd4 Nc5 19.Rf3 Ne4 20.Nxe4 dxe4 21.Rc3 Qb8 22.Kf2 Bd5 23.Be2 g6 24.Rd1 Qb7 25.Rc5 Rfc8 26.Rxc8+ Rxc8 27.c3 Kg7 28.h4 Bb3 29.Rg1 Qc6 30.h5 gxf5 31.Bxh5 Bc2 32.f5 0.12/39]

Stockfish 16: 1) 12.h4 Nxd4 13.Bxd4 b5 14.Bd3 Nc5 15.Qg4 Nxd3+ 16.cxd3 b4 17.Ne2 Qa5 18.b3 Qb5 19.Qg3 a5 20.h5 Ba6 21.Kd2 Rac8 22.Rac1 Rxc1 23.Rxc1 Rb8 24.h6 Rxc1 25.Nxc1 g6 26.Qe3 Kf8 27.Ba7 Ke8 28.Qb6 Kd7 29.Ke3 Kc8 30.Qxb5 Bxb5 31.Bb6 a4 32.Kd4 axb3 33.axb3 Kb7 34.Bc5 0.39/40]

Stockfish 16: 2) 12.a3 Qc7 13.h4 b5 14.Bd3 Nxd4 15.Bxd4 b4 16.axb4 Bxb4 17.Qh5 g6 18.Qe2 Bc5 19.Qe3 Bxd4 20.Qxd4 a5 21.Nb5 Qc6 22.Kd2 Nc5 23.Nd6 Ba6 24.Rxa5 Nb7 25.Rxa6 Rxa6 26.Bxa6 Qxa6 27.b4 Ra8 28.Rb1 Nxd6 29.exd6 Qxd6 30.b5 Rc8 31.b6 Rc4 32.Qe3 d4 33.Qe4 Rb4 34.Rxb4 Qxb4+ 35.Kd3 Qb5+ 36.Kxd4 Qxb6+ 37.Kc4 Qa7 38.Kb3 Qg1 39.c3 Qb6+ 40.Qb4 Qc7 41.c4 Qxf4 42.c5 0.28/40]

Stockfish 16: 3) 12.Bd3 Qb6 13.Na4 Qa5+ 14.c3 Nxe5 15.fxe5 Nxe5 16.Bc2 Nc4 17.Qd3 g6 18.b3 Nxe3 19.Qxe3 Bd7 20.b4 Qc7 21.0-0 e5 22.Nf3 Rae8 23.Bb3 Bc6 24.Rad1 a5 25.a3 Bd8 26.Nh4 h6 27.Ng2 hxf5 28.Qe2 d4 29.Qd3 Qd6 30.b5 e4 31.Qxd4 Qxd4+ 32.cxd4 Bxb5 33.Rfe1 Kg7 34.Nc5 Rh8 35.Nxe4 Bc6 36.Nd6 Rxe1+ 37.Nxe1 Bc7 38.d5 Bd7 39.Nxb7 0.21/40]

Stockfish 16: 4) 12.a4 Qa5 13.Qd2 Bc5 14.Nxc6 bxc6 15.Bxc5 Nxc5 16.b3 Rb8 17.h4 Rxb3 18.cxb3 Nxb3 19.Qb2 Nxa1 20.0-0 Qc5+ 21.Kg2 d4 22.Ne4 Qc2 23.Qxc2 Nxc2 24.Rc1 Ne3+ 25.Kf3 Nd5 26.Bc4 a5 27.Bb3 Ba6 28.Nc5 Bc8 29.Bxd5 exd5 30.Nb3 d3 31.Ke3 Bd7 32.Rc5 Rb8 33.Rxa5 Kf8 34.Nd4 Rb4 35.Kxd3 g6 36.h5 Rc4 37.h6 c5 38.Nb3 Bf5+ 39.Ke2 Rc2+ 40.Kd1 c4 41.Ra8+ Ke7 0.19/40]

Stockfish 16: 5) 12.Bf2 Bb4 13.h4 Ne7 14.Rh3 Nc5 15.a3 Bxc3+ 16.Rxc3 Ne4 17.Rh3 Qb6 18.Bg1 Bd7 19.h5 Rac8 20.Bd3 Nf5 21.Kf1 Nxd4 22.Bxe4 dxe4 23.Bxd4 Qc7 24.Rc3 Bc6 25.Ke1 Rfd8 26.Qd2 Rd5 27.Qf2 Qd7 28.Bb6 Ba4 29.Rxc8+ Qxc8 30.Rd1 Qc4 31.Rd2 e3 32.Bxe3 Qa2 33.Rxd5 Qxd5 0.14/40]

IMAGE 07

Home Insert Board Report Analysis Training View

Text Before Move Text After Move Insert Diagram Annotations Annotations Prefix

Set Mark Set Evaluation Enter Variation End Variation Delete Variation Promote Variation Enter Null Move Reorder Variations Clean up variations

IMAGE 08

Kibitzer: Stockfish 16

Stockfish 16 26 CPUs 0.26 12...Nxd4 13.Bxd4 b5 14.h5 b4 15.Na4 Qa5 16.b3 Bb7 17.h6 g6 18.0-0 Bc6 19.c4 Rf2 0.25 12...Re8 13.Qd2 Nxd4 14.Bxd4 b5 15.a3 Nb6 16.0-0-0 Nc4 17.Qd3 Qc7 18.Kb1 Bb7 depth=14, Time=0.7s

± 0.55 Depth=26 12.h4 (1/43) 29187 kN/s

1. ± (0.55): 12.h4 Qc7 13.h5 Bb4 14.h6 g6 15.0-0 Ndx5 16.Rf2 Nc4 17.Bxc4 Bxc3 18.bxc3 dxc4 19.Nxc6 Qxc6 20.Qd4 f6 21.Kh2 b5 22.Rd1 Bb7 2
 2. ± (0.47): 12.Bd3 Qb6 13.Na4 Qa5+ 14.c3 g6 15.b4 Qc7 16.h4 b5 17.Nxc6 Qxc6 18.Bd4 Bxa4 19.h5 Bc5 20.bxc5 Nxc5 21.Rb1 a5 22.Bc2 Ba6 23
 3. ± (0.45): 12.a3 Qc7 13.h4 b5 14.Bd3 Nc5 15.Nce2 b4 16.Nxc6 Nxd3+ 17.cxd3 Bxc3 18.Nd4 Qd7 19.a4 a5 20.h5 Ba6 21.Kf2 b3 22.Qe2 Rab2 2
 4. ± (0.40): 12.Rg1 Nxd4 13.Bxd4 Nb8 14.Na4 Nd7 15.Bd3 g6 16.Qd2 b5 17.Nc3 Bc5 18.Ne2 Qb6 19.Qe3 a5 20.h4 b4 21.Rh1 Ba6 22.h5 Bxd3 23
 5. = (0.25): 12.Bf2 Qc7 13.Bd3 Nc5 14.h4 Bd7 15.h5 Rac8 16.a3 b5 17.Nxc6 Qxc6 18.Bd4 Nxd3+ 19.cxd3 Qb7 20.h6 g6 21.Kf2 a5 22.Qe2 b4 23.a
 6. = (0.18): 12.a4 Bc5 13.Qd2 Qa5 14.Nxc6 bxc6 15.Bxc5 Nxc5 16.b3 Rb8 17.h4 Rxb3 18.Ndx5 Qxd2+ 19.Kxd2 exd5 20.cxb3 Nxb3+ 21.Ke3 d4+

Disconnect Settings

12.h4 Nxd4 13.Bxd4 0.31 depth=27 New Engine pragueblue 20.11.2023 0 (Points=0.12)
 12.h4 Qb6 13.a3 0.49 depth=37 Stockfish 20230604 ramiras 06.06.2023 2 (Points=0.12)
 12.h4 Nxd4 13.Bxd4 0.31 depth=34 Stockfish 20230604 ramiras 06.06.2023 2 (Points=0.10)
 Visits=3693



The saving of all of that information produces a game score with a lot of daunting data, and sadly no consensus with regard to what move ought to be played. Therein lies the flaw with the normal methodology. A player might conclude simply that the lack of clarity should simply impel longer and longer runs, but there are finite limitations, the capacity of our computers, the conflicting demands of multiple games for engine time, and our own time constraints.

Here is an image of the game score with all of the lines imbedded within the game score. As you can clearly see, the result is a morass of engine lines with conflicting evaluations. Here's the improved decision-making process. You are now well-advised to review each of these lines manually, a time-consuming process but one that will identify the nature of each line. The end of each line is sometimes illuminating, identifying transitions to endgames with useful chances. In this case, playing through the lines after 12.♟d3 show off a very forcing sequence with a confusing Black sacrifice of the knight on move 14.

See image 06

ChessBase makes it relatively easy to “clean up” or to consolidate all of these lines into a more useful and coherent whole with

► Insert ► Clean up variations

See image 07

The on-screen result is a much more useful notation containing a clean summary of all of the recorded lines. The consequence of this process is that you will often be able quickly to identify critical nodes in the analysis, essentially the positions that demand further attention. In this instance, a run within the 12.♟d3 line, after 12...♞b6 13.♞a4 ♞a5+ 14.c3, will show that after 14...♞xd4 15.♟xd4 b5, apparently trapping White's knight, that White has a game ending shot with 16.♟xh7. Many of the engines do not quickly see this well veiled combination when they are studying what to play on move 12 and confirm the finding only when forced to confront the position with the sacrifice looming on the board.

Stockfish appears to see the combination and recommend an alternative, the only hint that there is something remarkable going on behind the variations it is sharing.

Instead, most engines conclude that lines other than 12.♟d3 should be favored. Only after iteratively exploring the lines with the engine does the strength of 12.♟d3!! become fully apparent. Indeed, the process of exploring the engine recommendations at high depth at key points within the lines produces analysis that is highly detailed and far more trustworthy than the original engine recommendations.

Two other ChessBase features are also extremely useful for this kind of opening work.

At the bottom of the engine window is Let's Check, a summary of all of the computer runs. Some of you will be justifiably concerned that ChessBase appears to be spying upon your work. That's why there is a “Disconnect” button to remove your work from the glare of this rather amazing facility. We learn here, with Let's Check running, that there have been 3,693 engine runs in this position and that the longest runs are all within the 2023 calendar year and all favored 12.h4 rather than 12.♟d3.

I enjoy this facility, although, as you can readily see, it's just one additional tool and not always correct. The runs here tend to be far shorter than I would run the engine myself. And yes, I “disconnect” so that my opponents do not gain a chance to observe the work I am undertaking.

See image 08

LiveBook is available by checking its box within the View tab:

See image 09

LiveBook summarizes all of the moves that ChessBase users have examined. As you can see, despite my success with 12.♟d3, most users have favored 12.h4 in this position. Once again, you have the opportunity to disconnect from this facility by selecting “Disconnect”, an option that I regularly employ but only after I have checked LiveBook's data. LiveBook is one of the largest opening databases available, second in

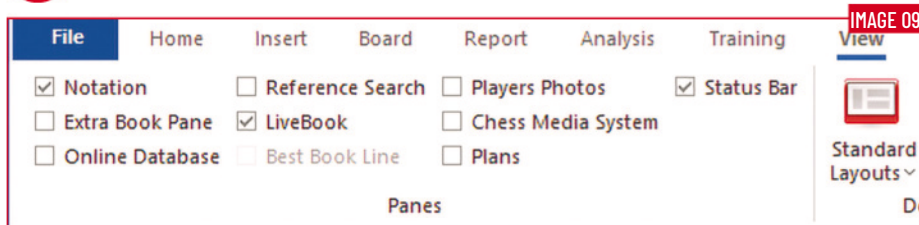


IMAGE 09

LiveBook

Disconnect Settings Find in Shop Novelty Mining

Move	Games	Result	Elo-Av	Date	Evaluation	Visits	[%]	My Moves
12.h4	3	67%	2585	2023-Aug	=	1522	36	
12.Qd2	2	50%	2771	2018	---	1072	25	
12.Bd3*	1	0%	2586	2023-May	±	1165	27	My Move
12.a4	0	-	-	2021	---	6	0	
12.a3	0	-	-	2019	---	295	7	
12.Nxc6	0	-	-	2015	---	39	1	
12.O-O	0	-	-	2011	---	127	3	
12.Rg1	0	-	-	2017	---	58	1	

IMAGE 10

size today only to the Chinese Neural Net Cloud database that I previously discussed within these pages [ACM #32, page 82 –Ed.].

My simple motto is not to run away from data, and chess enthusiasts are well advised to explore all of these interesting facilities.

See Image 10

I hope that readers will find my approach to be useful, and that many of you will gain a real appreciation for the intense research effort that we correspondence players bring to the game.

JON EDWARDS is the newly crowned World Correspondence Chess Champion living in Pennington, NJ. He also won the 10th US Championship.

Jon has written more than 40 chess books, notably *The Chess Analyst* (1999), *Sacking the Citadel* (2010), and *ChessBase Complete* (2014), which has recently received its 2019 Supplement Covering ChessBase 13, 14 & 15.

He is regular columnist for *Chess Life for Kids*. His web site, *Chess is Fun*, provides free chess instruction.





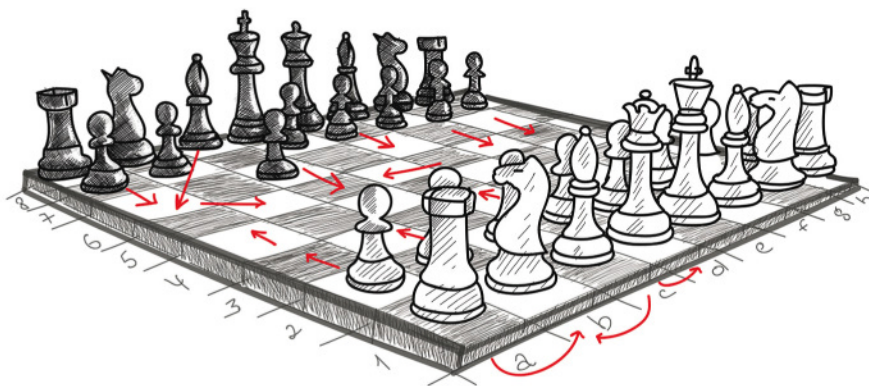
AMERICAN
CHESS MAGAZINE

ACMchess.com

Openings

for Amateurs

By Pete Tamburro; ptamburro@aol.com



Attacking patterns out of your Openings (Part II)

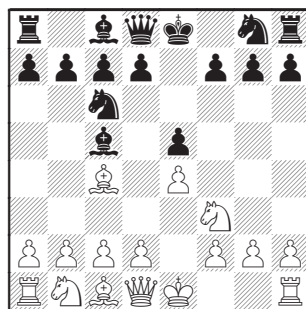
As my loyal readers know, I love using old games as well as modern games. I've pointed out that the ideas carried out in older games are not infrequently easier to understand than modern chess games. That's why so many amateurs get lost in the early middle game. It's best to learn the foundational concepts before trying to mimic today's greats. Moderns do play clear plans, but you have to dig for them.

This game, from the legendary Carlsbad, 1929, tournament, has had more than its share of commentators: Nimzowitsch and Tartakower among them. For these two GMs of the avant-garde school to take a special interest in this game made me wonder what caught their eye. White develops an attack against a castled king that is not on h7, a la Koltanowski, but on f7 of all places, which is the usual attacking point if Black doesn't castle fast enough. So, let's see what issues arose.

Becker - Mattison

Carlsbad, 1929

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♞c6 3.♙c4 ♙c5



Yup, we have a diagram already!

4.0-0 In the 1920s, most annotators simply noted that 4.c3 was the best move. They

may have been right, but a great deal of theory has been created on the main line and the one that goes 4...♟f6 5.d4 exd4 6.e5. We're not going there today!

We have the slow Italian Game rediscovered my modern masters: 4.d3 ♟f6 5.0-0 Blackburne and Mason would not infrequently play 6.♙e3. Their opponents would often play 6...Bb6 so as not to open the f-file with 6...♙xe3, which is germane to our discussion here. 5...d6 6.c3 a6 You will have to know how to play chess and study a good many games to get the strategies down pat;

Another off-beat line is 4.d4 It has even been played by Nakamura and Carlsen. A frequent player of the line is a master by the name of Collin Colbow. The legendary New Orleans fixture, master Jude Acers, along with George Laven, devoted considerable time to it in their book, "The Italian Gambit System." It might be fun to look at this sometime.

4...d6 4...♟f6 5.d4 ♙xd4! Avoiding the Max Lange proper after exd4, which, btw, is worth avoiding. 6.♟xd4 ♟xd4 7.♙g5 (7.f4 d6 8.fxe5 dxe5 9.♙g5 ♟e7 10.♟h1 ♙e6 11.♟d2 ♙d7 12.♟b3 ♟e6 13.♙xf6 gxf6 14.♟f3 ♙g8! 15.♟xf6 ♟xf6 16.♙xf6 ♙g6 17.♙af1=) 7...h6 8.♙h4 d6 (8...g5 9.f4! gxf6 10.fxe5 d5 11.♟xd4 dxc4 12.♟xd8+ ♟xd8 13.exf6±) 9.f4 ♙g4 10.♟d2 g5! 11.fxe5 dxe5 12.♙g3 ♟e7 (Stockfish 16's evaluation; however, it seems to be more than that. Black's attack on the kingside seems further along than whatever White has in mind on the queenside after Black castles there.);

I only give this following variation because I see it played. What motivates people to voluntarily have Black's position after move eight, is beyond my understanding. Do some people just have a "passive gene?" Take up the Two Knights and live a little! 4...h6 5.c3 d6 6.d4 exd4 7.cxd4 ♙b6 8.♟c3± with no fear of 8...♙g4 9.♙b5 ♙xf3 10.gxf3± Control of the center, the

threat of d5 and the open g-file secure White the advantage.

5.c3 There are a slew of options for White here as well. If you're Black, you had best have a move or two ready to go for each: a) 5.♟c3 ♟f6 6.d3 ♟a5, avoiding the main line of the Canal Variation and getting the two bishops;

b) 5.d3 This move allows 5...♟f6 because Black can prevent the Canal line with a developing move and a cautionary h6 move. With the knight on c3 first, then that ♙g5 move can come quickly with the threat of ♟d5. Black can handle it easily enough, but may not like the resulting defensive array. 6.♟c3 h6; For those who don't like the knight getting pinned because the king is already castled over there, this is a "comfort" move. 5.h3 ♟f6 and we'll end up in the slow Italian;

c) 5.b4!? ♙xb4 6.c3 ♙a5 7.♟b3 With the black bishop on a5, White doesn't yet have to worry about ♟a5. 7...♟e7 (7...♟h6 8.d4 0-0 9.♙g5 ♟e8 10.♟bd2 ♙b6 11.♙xh6 ♟a5 12.♟a3 gxf6 13.dxe5 dxe5 14.♙e2 ♟d7 15.c4 ♟d6 16.♟c3=) 8.d4 ♙b6 9.♙b5 ♙d7 10.♙xc6 bxc6 (Good place for an inaccuracy: 10...♙xc6? 11.a4 a6 12.♟bd2± and moves like a5, ♙a3 and ♟bd2-c4 give White compensation for the pawn.) 11.dxe5 dxe5 Although it would be interesting to see this played out by our imaginary club players. White has a4 and ♙a3 along with ♟bd2 and repositioning the queen and hopefully getting some play against the Black pawn mess on the queenside while the bishop pair, the secure king position after castling and general freedom of movement the queen and rooks will have will balance that. There is no certain outcome here.

5...♟f6!? Nimzowitsch had an interesting take on this move: "Nimzovich: Personally, I remain firmly convinced that a thorough understanding of the secrets of defensive play makes any memorization of the openings unnecessary. Thus, here I would

have played 5...♙b6, meeting d4 with ♙g4. Upon the further 7.♖b3 ♜e7 8.♘g5 ♙h5 9.d5 ♘d8 10.♙b5+ ♗f8. Becker would have had to leave his world of memorized variations, and turn, instead, to position play."

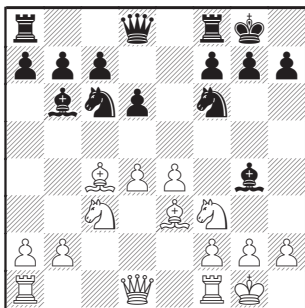
5...♙b6 6.b4 (6.d4 ♘f6 and (6...♙g4 are both playable.)) 6...♘f6 7.a4 a5 8.b5 ♘e7 9.d4 exd4 10.♞e1 ♙g4 11.cxd4 ♙xf3 12.gxf3 d5 13.♙f1 dxe4 14.♙b2 exf3 15.♙a3=.

6.d4 White can still resort to the slower line, which is equal and will have lots of play. 6.d3 a6 7.a4 0-0 8.b4 ♙a7 9.♞e1.

6...exd4?! 6...♙b6!

7.cxd4 ♙b6 8.♘c3 8.h3 ♘xe4 9.♞e1 0-0 10.♞xe4 d5 11.♙xd5 ♖xd5 12.♘c3 ♖d8 13.d5 ♘e7 14.♖b3± (14.a4±).

8...♙g4 9.♙e3 0-0



Taking on f3 must be thought out well by both sides: 9...♙xf3 10.gxf3± ♖d7 11.a4 ♙a5 12.♗h1 0-0-0 13.d5 ♘e5 14.♙e2 ♙b6 15.f4 ♘g6 16.a5 ♙xe3 17.fxe3 ♗b8 18.a6 b6+.

10.♙b3 ♞e8 10...h6?! 11.♖d3! ♙xf3 12.gxf3 ♘h5 13.♘d5 and White is in great shape;

However... Black must play 10...♖c8! because neither 11.h3 (11.♖d3 ♙xf3 12.gxf3 ♖h3±) 11...♙xf3 12.♖xf3 ♘xd4

13.♙xd4 ♙xd4± work well for White. Just that little h3 move with the queen on c8 makes the difference.

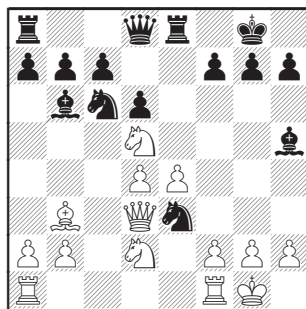
11.♖d3 ♙h5 11...♙xf3 12.gxf3 ♖d7 13.♗g2 d5 14.e5 ♘h5 15.♘e2 g6 16.♞g1 ♘g7 17.♗h1± (17.♘g3 a5 18.f4 a4 19.♙d1 ♗h8 20.♗h1 ♘e7 21.♙c2±) One possible path could be 17...♖f5 18.♖xf5 ♘xf5 19.♞ad1 ♘ce7 20.♙g5 ♗f8 21.♙c2 ♞ec8 22.h4 c5 23.h5 ♘xd4 24.♘xd4 cxd4 25.♙b3.

12.♘d2 Take a close look at the position. Black has a cramped position, but he has no pawn weaknesses and his four minor pieces (with the B on g6) and rook are putting pressure on the White center.

Also to be considered are 12.a3 which keeps the bishop on the diagonal toward f7 and away from ♘a5 by Black and; 12.♞ae1 to support the centre.

12...♙g4? 12...♙g6! because if White (why he played ♘d2) plays 13.f4 then NOW 13...♘g4 is good. 14.f5 ♙h5 and the threat on d4 is nasty.

13.♘d5 ♘xe3??



Just dreadful. Opening up the f-file and exposing f7 is exactly what White is set up for: bishop on b3, queen access to that same diagonal, the rooks doubling on the f7 target. Even the knight on d2 has a path to attack f7. This was an era when several players were in love with the two

bishops, but for this? One black bishop may disappear, but White may want to keep the dominant knight and the other is relegated to the defence of f7 that was abandoned by the rook. Have you got your plan ready?

Black had to try 13...♗g6 The shame of it is that the moves ♗g6 and ♖g4 had to be timed better. You can't just play routine moves. There has to be both a strategic and tactical reason for the order of your move choices. Never underestimate any position. If Black had played the bishop back, what should White's plan be? Always remember to bring the queen rook into the game. But should you take a bishop, and, if so, which one? My vote would be the ♗b6 to take the pressure off that diagonal. With the coming of f4 and f5, though, the black bishop will be chased off the defence of f7. Just one example: 14.♞ae1 h6 15.♖xb6 axb6 16.f4 ♜f6 17.f5 ♗h7 18.♖f3 d5 19.exd5 (19.e5 ♜xf5 20.♜xf5 ♗xf5 21.♗f4 h5 22.h3 ♖h6 23.♗xh6 gxh6 24.♖h4 ♗e6± looks good for White because of the broken K-side pawns and the control of the f-file, but Black can have a queen side counter with Na5 and c5 and it won't be easy.) 19...♗xf5 20.♜c3 ♞xe3 21.♞xe3 ♖xe3 22.♜xe3 ♖a5 23.♖e5 ♖xb3 24.axb3 h5 25.h3 h4 26.♜c1 and again with much work ahead.

14.fxe3 Both White and Black have key thoughts here. White obviously wants to double on file, find a more active place for the knight on d2 (c4 or ♖f3) and secure the bishop on the a2-f7 diagonal. Black has to plan a defense of f7. Which one is of immediate importance?

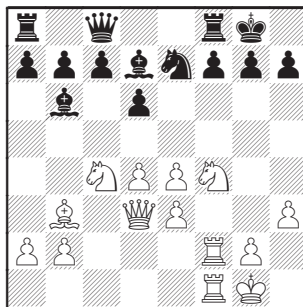
14...♞f8 Getting that bishop off the a2-g8 diagonal is a must: 14...♖a5 15.♗a4 (15.♗c2 ♗g6 16.b4±) 15...♞f8 16.♖f4 and White goes after the more mobile bishop and the one defending f7. Get rid of a key defender! Even after ♖a5, Black's position is still inferior, but in chess you still have to fight.

15.♞f2 Time to double up.

15...♖e7 16.♖f4 As referred to above.

16...♗g4 17.♞af1 ♜c8 17...♗h8 18.h3 ♗d7 19.♖c4+.

18.h3 ♗d7 19.♖c4



This is what you might call an optimum position. White still has his bishop hitting f7, the two rooks join in that threat. The ♖c4 may help with e5 and perhaps capturing on e5. This plan doesn't happen unless Black took ♖xe3. The other knight can probe the rest of the castle wall with ♖h5, and the queen will make a grand entrance when her men have breached the walls.

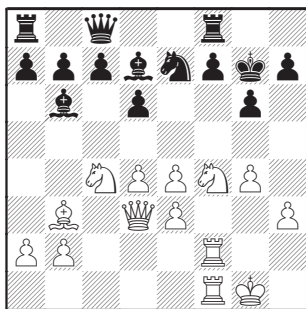
Even 19.♖f3 is good.

19...g6? Oh, my...creating several weak squares at once.

Black is lost, but, again, stiffer resistance could be found in 19...♗h8 20.a4 ♖c6 21.♜c3 a6 22.♖h5 f6 23.e5 ♜e8 24.g4 dxe5 25.dxe5 ♗a5 26.♖xa5 ♖xa5 27.exf6 ♞xf6 28.♞xf6+.

20.g4 A more razzle-dazzle approach was 20.♖h5! ♗b5 (20...gxh5 21.♞xf7 ♞xf7 22.♖xb6 cxb6 23.♞xf7 ♗h8 24.♞xe7 ♗xh3 25.♜f1 ♜f8 26.♞f7 ♜h6 27.gxh3) 21.♖f6+ ♗g7 22.♖xh7 ♗xh7 23.♞xf7+ ♞xf7 24.♞xf7+ ♗h8 25.♜f1 ♜e6 26.♜f2.

20...♖g7



OK, this is the moment to go from the optimum position to initiating concrete action. You can't just sit there and look powerful. You have to act. White has every piece placed where he wants it. The square f7 is indirectly attacked three times and defended twice. Thus, the next step is to uncover direct attacks by moving the knights. One takes out the bishop and the other offers himself while exposing the dark square weaknesses pointed out before.

21.e5 d5 22.♘xb6 axb6 23.e4 Yes. Threaten to keep the diagonal open.

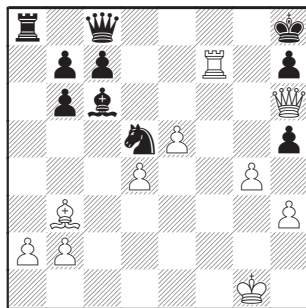
23...dxe4 If 23...c6 24.♖g3 ♕e8 25.♖h4 ♘g8 26.exd5 cxd5 27.♘xd5 and Black's feeble attempts to cover f7 and the weak dark squares comes to naught: 27...♗d8 28.♗xd8 ♜xd8 29.♘c7 ♜xd4 30.♘e6+ fxe6 31.♜xf8+.

24.♗xe4 ♕c6 24...♕e6 25.♘xe6+ fxe6 26.♜xf8+.

25.♗e3 Or 25.d5 Both work equally.

25...♖h8 26.♘h5 gxh5 Nothing works for Black. There is an avalanche of White pieces and pawns. 26...f5 27.exf6 ♘d5 28.♗h6 ♜f7 29.♘f4 ♜xf6 30.♘g6+ ♜xg6 31.♜f8+ ♗xf8 32.♜xf8+ ♜xf8 33.♗xf8+ ♜g8 34.♗f7+.

27.♜xf7 ♜xf7 28.♜xf7 ♘d5 29.♗h6



The Grand Entrance promised some moves back. The conquest of f7, planned out right after ♘xe3, is aptly symbolized by the rook on f7.

29...♗g8 30.♕xd5 ♗g6 31.♜f8+

1-0

Nicely played by Becker.

What do we learn here? In the Open Games, the fundamental rules of development, pawn play, development in attack and defence have stayed relatively stable and are thus easier for the amateur to build his repertoire of experience (thought I was going to say openings, didn't you?). As in every opening - A or B or C or D or E - that has a theoretical heritage there is memorization required, but as Nimzo pointed out above, once you're away from your memorization, you must rely on your understanding of the requirements of the position. Becker planned an excellent attack once Mattison made his grievous positional error. He optimized his forces against f7. Even if Mattison didn't cooperate with that one move, you can see from the alternatives presented that Plan B still followed the idea against f7 and gave a slight edge. You try and get all your pieces to act as a team - no "one move wonder" threats. This will make you the better player you want to be.



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WINTON BRITISH CHESS SOLVING CHAMPIONSHIP 2024-2025
(Organised by the British Chess Problem Society)

To ECF Website

Entry to this competition sponsored by Winton is by solving the starter problem below. White, playing up the board, is to play and force mate in two moves against any Black defence. There is no entry fee, and the competition is open to British residents only. Competitors need only send White's first move, known as the key move. Entries can be made in one of two ways: -

- 1 By post to Nigel Dennis, Boundary House, 230 Greys Road, Henley-on-Thames, Oxon RG9 1QY
- 2 By email to winton@theproblemist.org

All entries must be postmarked or emailed no later than 31st July 2024 and must give the entrant's name and home address. Juniors under the age of 18 on 31st August 2023 must give their date of birth.

All entrants should mention where they first saw the starter problem. Receipt of the solution to the starter will only be acknowledged after the closing date, when all competitors will receive the answer, and those who get it right will also receive the postal round, which will contain 8 more difficult and varied problems. In due course the best competitors and the best juniors from the postal round will be invited to the final in February 2025. The exact date and location will be advised. The prize money in the final is likely to be around £2,500. The winner of the final will win the right to represent Great Britain at the World Chess Solving Championships 2025.

WBCSC Starter 2024-2025

Black (10 Men)



White (8 Men)

To find out more about the BCPS and to follow the course of the competition see: -

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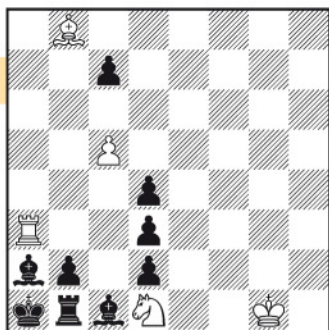
Nigel Dennis 7th May 2024
Controller
Winton British Chess Solving Championship

White to play and mate in two moves

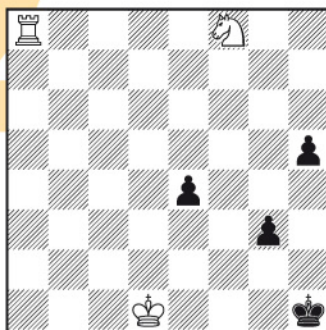
Endgame Studies

by Ian Watson

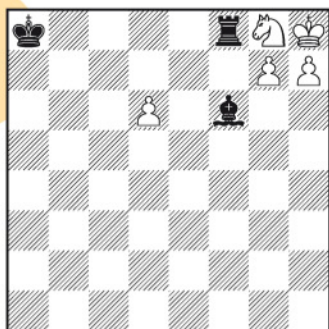
ian@irwatson.uk



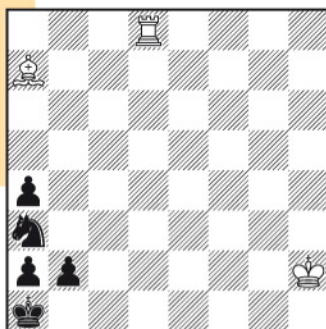
O. Votruba
Ceske Slovo 1924
WIN



V. & M. Platov
Shakhmaty 1924
WIN



K. Fabel
Hamburgischer Correspondent 1933
DRAW



J. Timman
The Art of the Endgame 2011
WIN

THE INDIAN THEME

Gukesh's victory in the Candidates was somewhat unexpected, but there are many super-talented young Indian players now and eventually one was likely to emerge at the highest level. In contrast, when Anand became World Champion he was a statistical outlier, a lone force, much like the extraordinary Sultan Khan was in the inter-war years. Yet, chess in India has deeper roots than in any other country - chess itself is derived from the ancient game *chaturanga* that was played in the Gupta Empire in the 7th century CE. *Chaturanga* is, however, a relatively recent refinement - there are archaeological finds of a similar board game in the Indus valley from 3,000 to 2,000 BCE.

What about the field of chess composition? The most popular chess composition theme is the Indian Theme. The first problem showing it was composed by Henry Augustus Loveday and published in the *Chess Player's Chronicle* in 1845. Loveday was born in India, was educated in England, and then returned to India, from where he sent his problem to Staunton. That problem was a mate in four, and the overwhelming majority of compositions using the theme have been direct mate problems. There are some Indian Theme studies, however, and this month we have four of them. I looked for studies showing the Theme *and* composed by Indian composers, but I didn't succeed. Indeed, there are few Indian study composers; only two are mentioned on the ARVES site where huge numbers of study composers are mentioned. Maybe that's because study composing is usually an activity taken up by over-the-board players later in their life, and the Indian chess revolution is a recent phenomenon, so their players are mainly still young.

In case you're not familiar with the Theme, Otakar Votruba's study is a good introduction; its first and second White moves are the essence of the Theme. I found two versions of the Platov brothers' study, this one and the same position but with the white king on d2. The latter version has a second solution beginning 1.♖a3. Perhaps it was the original version, a reader spotted the dual, and the composers corrected it?

Karl Fabel's draw study shows a 'Black Indian' - the theme moves are made by Black rather than by White. There had been lengthy discussion about whether such a version of the Theme could be composed in an orthodox problem; Fabel showed it could be composed, but instead as a study. Our fourth study is nearly a century newer than the others, so of course it shows novel aspects of the Theme.

The solutions are on page 383.

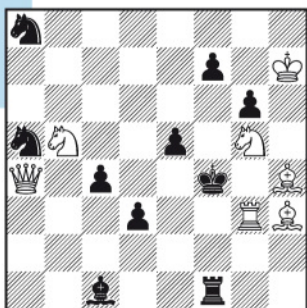
PROBLEM WORLD

by Christopher Jones

cjajones1@yahoo.co.uk

Grandmaster of Chess Composition

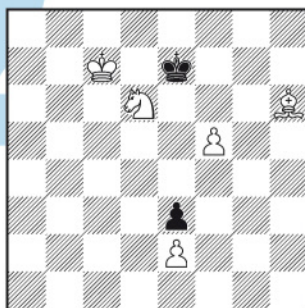
Solutions are given on page 382



Leonid Lyubashevsky and
Leonid Makaronez (Israel)

Mate in 3

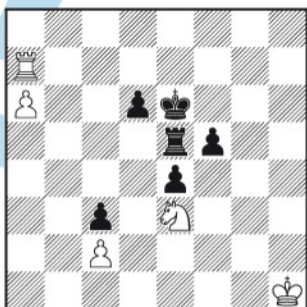
ORIGINAL



Paul Michelet (London)

Mate in 6

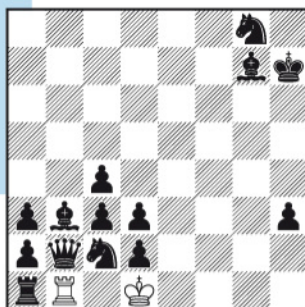
ORIGINAL



Stanislav Hudak (Slovakia)

Helpmate in 3 - 2 solutions

ORIGINAL



Ljubomir Ugren (Slovenia)

Helpmate in 7

ORIGINAL

JUDGING PROBLEMS IN BCM IN 2022 AND 2023

BCM recently received the award made by the German expert, Hans Gruber, a FIDE International Judge, based upon his judging the new problems published in BCM over 2022 and 2023

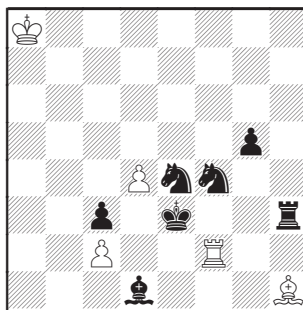
Such judgments are made by most magazines or websites that regularly publish new problems. Generally, there are four categories: Prizes, for problems that are regarded as being in some way or other exceptionally meritorious; Honourable Mentions (near misses); Commendations; and the rest, which don't find a place in the award.

Very rarely do the 'Prizes' have any monetary value! But in the world of chess composers, the approbation delivered by a high place in an award is generally cherished. The question arises: how are the problems evaluated? There is no one objective criterion, and, as with art prizes or literature prizes (e.g., the Man Booker Prize), there is no way in which you can prove the superiority of the best entries. Rather disconcertingly, there is so much subjectivity involved that another expert judge might give a different set of evaluations. Some problem composers therefore deprecate such awards. Others enjoy the approbation when it comes, and probably reckon that over time the inequalities even out.

What qualities do judges such as Hans Gruber value? It was put to me that amongst these would be difficulty and unusualness. There is an element of truth in these suggestions. A well-concealed (and hence difficult) solution may well be all the more satisfying when found; and it is definitely all to the good when a problem covers new ground. (New ground is quite difficult to

find in the orthodox fields of the problems seen in BCM - if you look online, you will find a profusion of fairy chess problems, featuring different pieces and strange stipulations!) In orthodox chess, judges value elegant demonstrations of thematic play - ideally, there is a logical structure, as both White and Black pursue strategic objectives. The judgment is an aesthetic one - one may even say an artistic one. In the problems below, which were the six winners of Prizes in the award, you will see the diverse way in which aesthetic criteria have been applied in their assessment. (In each case, we give the issue in which the problem was published; in some instances, the problem is more fully explained there.)

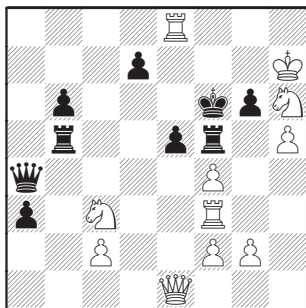
1st Prize – Christopher Jones (1/2022)



Helpmate in 3 - (b)Pg5>f5

Regular readers will know that in helpmates the solutions are collaborative sequences of play initiated by Black - here (a) 1.♘e2 ♕f3 2.♖f4 ♙h5+ 3.♖f3 ♖xf3# and (b) 1.♘g3 ♖f3+ 2.♖e4 ♙d3+ 3.♕f3 ♙xf3#. Hans' comment: "Complex interaction of black and white pieces moving onto f3 ... homogeneous interferences, reciprocal play, and orthogonal-diagonal analogy - and all that in a light position".

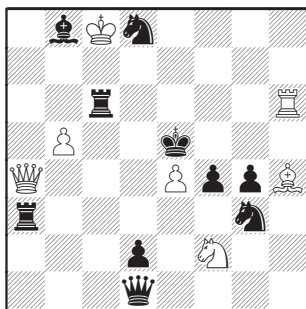
2nd Prize – Leonid Lyubashevsky and Leonid Makaronez (XI/2023)



Mate in 3

The solution features “a wonderful duel of the queens with rich and lively play”. The key move is 1.♖e4, which threatens 2.♖g3 (and 3.♖xg6♯), and what Hans describes as “the star move” is, after the defence 1...♗a7, 2.♕g8!! (threat 3.♕g4♯), after which four different second-move defences fail to four different mating moves. There are also pleasing lines of play after three other first-move defences - 1...♗xc2 or ...♗b3; 1...♗c4 or ...♗b4; and 1...d6 or ...♗a8. (Fuller details in last November’s BCM; or do ask me to send you the full text of the award.)

3rd Prize – David Shire (XII/2022)

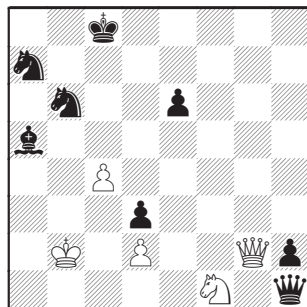


Mate in 2

“A masterful concept”. David Shire’s problems usually have genuinely beguiling tries - near misses that narrowly fail, underlining the pleasing logic of what makes

the one true solution work. Here, 1.♗b4 and 1.♗c4 both, very plausibly, provide nicely for the defences ...♕e6 and ...♕d6, but both fail - 1.♗b4? ♕b7!; 1.♗c4? ♕a7! - “excellent refutations” indeed. The key is 1.♕d7! (threat 2.♕f6♯) - check out the responses to defences ...♖d3+ / ...♕h5/...♕xe4/...f3.

4th Prize – Christer Jonsson (III/2022)

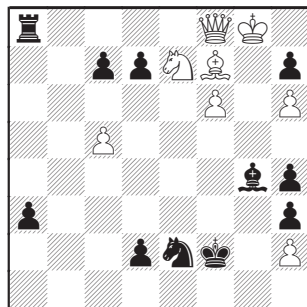


Helpmate in 3 - 2 solutions

1.♗xg2 ♕g3 2.♗b7 ♕e4 3.♕a6 ♕c5♯.
1.♗xf1 c5 2.♗f7 cxb6 3.♗d7 ♗a8♯.

The Zilahi theme, shown here in the captures of White’s two major pieces, each of which mates in the other solution, is a perennial helpmate favourite, but Hans remarks on the rarity of finding a computer-verified sound example of this length featuring a free white queen - “this light and surprising presentation is a great achievement”.

5th Prize – Abdelaziz Onkoud (X/2022)

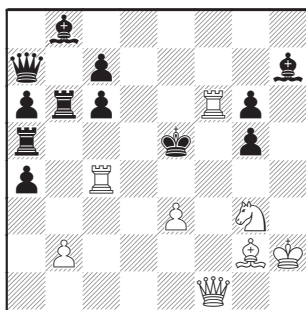


Helpmate in 3 - 2 solutions

1. ♖a5 ♜g6 2. ♜xc5 ♜xc5+ 3. ♜f3 ♜d5#.
 1. ♜a6 ♜g6 2. ♜xf6 ♜xf6+ 3. ♜e3 ♜d5#.

As Hans says, “Reciprocally changed functions of the white bishop and the white knight on g6 on move 1 and on d5 on move 3. The author must be praised for his daringness in using the white queen.”

**6th Prize – Leonid Lyubashevsky and
 Leonid Makaronez (11/2023)**



Mate in 3

Like the same composers’ 2nd Prize winner this illustrates how the lucidity of the solution is all the more charming when concealed by a bafflingly difficult set-up. Here the key is 1. ♜f2 with “the incredible threat” 2. ♜e4 and 3. ♜g3#. Random moves by the b6 rook are met by 2. ♜xc6, 1... ♜xb2 by 2. ♜xb2+. If 1... ♜c5, “the even more incredible move” 2. ♜f7!! (for 3. ♜f6#) prevails. Note also 1... ♜g8 2. ♜h5!. I’m delighted that contributions from the ‘two Leonids’, in which quiet moves in mid-solution are miraculously decisive, receive recognition.

A number of other composers appear among the Honourable Mentions and Commendations - Alvaro Pereira, Luis Quaresma, Kabe Moen, Michael McDowell, John Rice, Yuri Bilokin, Ljubomir Ugren and Paul Michelet. Congratulations one and all!

If you would like to see a PDF of the full award, I’d be delighted to send you it - please email me at cjajones1@yahoo.co.uk.

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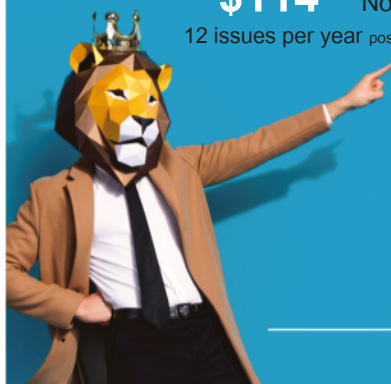
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QUOTES AND QUERIES

MINIATURES By Alan Smith

6254 The Decisive games in 15 moves or less are rare. Two in the same match is rarer still, but not unique.

When the City of London CC travelled to Rugby to meet the MCCU on 1st November 1913 it was clear that the team's captain wished to improve on their previous showing against them a decade earlier. The home team lacked Arthur Mackenzie and Frank and Fred Brown. City of London fielded Burn, Lawrence, George Thomas, R.C.Griffith, Edward Lasker, Blake, Wainwright, Loman, Michell Davidson and Scott on boards 1 to 11. MCCU managed two draws and one win against this array of talent, six of whom had represented Great Britain in the cable match series with the United States. Here are the miniatures from boards 1 and 5.

Amos Burn - Edward Heath Collier

Board 1, 1913

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♙b5 f5 4.♘c3 ♘f6 5.exf5 e4 6.♘g5 d5 7.d3 ♙xf5 8.dxe4 dxe4 9.♖e2 ♙b4 10.0-0 A bit blase, 10.♙d2 has proved good for white ever since a Leonhardt- Spielmann match game in 1906.

10...♙xc3 11.bxc3 ♖e7?! 12.♖c4 ♙d7 13.♙e3 h6? Black does not have time for this. 14.♙c5! ♘e5 15.♖d4.

1-0

Birmingham Daily Post,
11th November 1913

Edward Lasker - Hubert Price

Board 5, 1913

1.d4 d5 2.♘f3 ♘f6 3.c4 e6 4.♘c3 c5 5.cxd5 exd5? 5...♘xd5 is correct. The text allows white to transpose into an advantageous line of the Tarrasch Defence.

6.♙g5 ♙e6 7.e4 Introduced in the game Emanuel Lasker - Mieses Paris 1900.

7...dxe4 7...♙e7 8.♙b5+ ♘c6 9.♘e5 ♖b6 10.dxc5 ♖xc5 11.♙e3 Ed Lasker - Conde Hamburg 1910.

8.♙b5+ ♘bd7 9.♙xd7+ ♙xd7 10.♘xe4 ♖a5+ 11.♙d2 ♖a6 12.♘xf6+ ♖xf6? 12...gxf6 Abbott.
13.0-0 cxd4 14.♖e1+ ♙e7 15.♙g5

1-0

Illustrated London News,
20th December 1913

Interested readers can find a report on the 1903 match and 10 game scores at www.saund.co.uk/britbase.

6255 Fast forward 84 years to the second 4NCL weekend at Kenilworth. North West Eagles met Bristol in round 4. Unlike in 1913, the teams were evenly matched. Simon Ansell had defeated Luke McShane in the previous round.

Gary Quillan - Simon Ansell

Board 1, 1997

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 g6 3.c4 ♙g7 4.d4 ♘c6 4...cxd4 5.♘xd4 ♘c6 is usual.

5.d5 ♘d4 6.♙d3 This looks insipid.

6...e5? 6...d6 is better, I suppose black was angling for 7.de6? dxe6.

7.0-0 d6 8.♘xd4 cxd4 9.f4! ♘f6? Black had to find 9...exf4 10.♙xf4 ♘e7.

10.fxe5 dxe5 11.♙g5 h6 12.♙xf6 12...♙xf6 13.♙f3.

1-0

Britbase

Alan Smith - David Moskovich

Board 7, 1997

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 d6 3.♙b5+ ♘d7 4.d4 ♘gf6 5.0-0 a6 Six years later he accepted the gambit 5...♘xe4 6.♙e2 ♘ef6 7.dxc5 dxc5 8.♙d1 e6 9.♘e5 a6, but after 10.♙c4 ♙b6 11.♘c3 I got ample compensation.

6.♙xd7+ ♘xd7 7.c4 g6?

8.e5!? I wanted to open the centre before he had time to castle, 8.dxc5 dxc5 9.♙d2 is also a try.

8...cxd4 He ought to have played 8...dxe5 9.dxe5 ♙g7 but white has a good game after 10.♙f4.

9.exd6 e5 9...exd6.

10.♙e1 ♙xd6 11.♙h6! 11.♙xd4 is also strong eg 11...♙c5 12.♙xe5+ ♘xe5 13.♙xe5+ ♔d7 14.♙xc5.

11...♙e7 12.♘xd4 f5 13.♘c3 ♘b6 13...♙f6 14.♘d5.

14.♘f3 ♙d7 15.♙g5 15...♙e6 16.♘d4 ♙f7 17.♘xf5 ♙xf5 18.♙xd6.

1-0

Note none of the losers castled!



SOLUTIONS TO PROBLEMS

Firstly, **apologies** for an error in the Problem World diagrams in March 2024. In the first problem, by David Shire, a white bishop at g8 was omitted. Apologies indeed to the composer and to readers who must have been bemused by this error.

This month's problems

I'm going to repeat what I said at the start of the last Problem World: "as usual, we start with the shortest direct mate problem, but this time the three-mover, typically for its composers, requires you to find a neat key move, against which there are a number of defences, each refuted by a specific white second move, and so may well not be the easiest to solve (you may prefer just to enjoy reading through the solution)". In other words, another blockbuster from the two Leonids! We have the same four composers as for the four originals in the last issue, and in the case of Paul's problem also I think you'll find that it is typical of the composer - you just need to find the right strategy, which unfolds in a way full of aesthetic charm. And then it's the murky world of helpmates - Black initiating collaborative sequences at the end of which he is mated. Stanislav's is a good test of your solving prowess - of middling difficulty, I should say. Ljubomir's is a harder solve. Pat yourself on the back if you can see how we can reach mate on White's seventh move - otherwise, just enjoy playing through the solution, admiring how Ljubomir has constructed a totally unique sequence of moves.

A deceptively keyed three-mover

A recurring motif in the two Leonids' problem is that White would like to give mate with the move ♖e4. Indeed, if it were Black to play and he obligingly played 1...d2 then 2.♖c2 would force mate by 3.♖e4. But to force the issue White must make another threat. 1.♘c3 threatens 2.♘d5#, and if Black defends with 1...e4 then 2.♖e8 is another way of forcing 3.♖e4#. However, 1...♘c7 would be an adequate defence. So subtlety is required, and great kudos if you saw that 1.♖b4! fits the bill. Now White threatens 2.♖e1 (threats 3.♖e4 and 3.♖xf1) and 2...♙e3 and 2...♗xe1 would fail respectively to 3.♖xe3 and 3.♗f3. There are three defences on move one. Firstly, Black can try 1...♙e3. Now the killer move is 2.♖f8 (threat 3.♖xf7), after which we have 2...e4/f5/f6 3.♖d6/♗g4/♖xf6. Or Black can try 1...d2, and now the white queen visits yet another square to threaten 3.♖e4, playing 2.♖b1!. The defences now are 2...♗e1/f5 3.♗f3/♘e6. Finally, Black can try 1...f5, but now 2.♘e6+ ♗e4 3.♘c3

gives mate. I greatly admire not only the variety of play by the white queen, but also the permutation of roles by the supporting cast of white officers, and the totally accurate play.

Triangulations

If you follow Ian Watson's studies page you will know that Paul Michelet is also a skilled composer of endgame studies, and there is something of a feeling of a cross-over of genres in his six-mover. In one sense, of course, it's unlike a study in that there are countless ways to win; but to force mate on move six it's necessary to get into the frame of mind of an endgame player, or study solver, who has to calculate how to use the opposition. In this case, we find that White, after making an unsurprising first move, must then, much less predictably, show that that first move was a way of temporizing preceding a move further away from the action. The effect achieved is of two triangulations - 1.♔c6 ♕f6 2.♔b6 ♕e5 3.♔c5 ♕f6 4.♔c6 ♕e5 5.♔g5 ♕d4 6.♔f6#. Or, in this line of play, 4...♕e7 5.♔g7 ♕d8 6.♔f6#.

(See page 376)

Those murky helpmates

In Stanislav's helpmate, precise play leads to two comparable mating positions (*model* mates in that each possible flight is prevented in just one way) - (Black moving first) 1.f4 ♖d7 2.♜f5 ♜xd6+ 3.♜e5 ♜c4♯; and 1.♜c5 ♜xf5 2.♜d5 ♜b7 3.♜c6 ♜e7♯. Stanislav notes "Chumakov theme", which I believe refers to the fact that the pawns at d6 and f5 both provide an essential block in one solution and are captured in the other. As well as for the enjoyment of the play that it is possible in helpmates it is worth getting into this genre if you are tempted to take part in a solving competition - typically it is the helpmate that flummoxes newcomers to such competitions.

Although Stanislav's is the sort of helpmate you might expect to meet in a solving competition, Ljubomir's seven-mover is not - it would be horrendous to try to solve it against the clock! But there is enjoyment to be had by playing through the solution - 1.♜e7 ♜xa1 2.♜b1+ ♜xb1 3.♜g8 ♜xb3 4.♜f8 ♜xc3 5.a1=♜+ ♜xd2 6.♜f1 ♜xd3 7.♜f7 ♜d8♯. You may not have envisioned a promoted rook being at f7 in the final position! As noted last time, when one piece (in this case, the rook at a1) is captured but is then in effect 'reborn' through a pawn promotion, we have what is known as the Phoenix theme.

SOLUTIONS TO ENDGAMES

(See page 374)

Votruba

1.♜a8 c6 2.♜a7 ♜b3 3.♜b6+ ♜a2 4.♜a5 ♜b3 5.♜b4+ ♜a2 6.♜a3 ♜b3 7.♜xb2 mate. This is a very pure demonstration of the Theme; it begins with the 'critical move' and every move after that is either an interference or a stalemate release. Notice also that this is an 'extended Indian' in that the stalemate release manoeuvre is repeated, in this case repeated twice. An additional merit is that the White bishop visits all the black squares on the a- and b-files (provided you count the capture of the Black king on the move after the mating move!)

Platov

1.♜a5 h4 2.♜h5 g2 3.♜xh4+ ♜g1 4.♜e1 e3 5.♜h8 e2 6.♜h7 wins. The Theme appearing at the culmination of the composition rather than at its initiation.

1...g2 2.♜xh5+ ♜g1 3.♜e1 e3 4.♜g6 e2 5.♜h4. In the main line, 2...♜g2 3.♜g6 h3 4.♜f4+.

Fabel

1.d7 ♜b8 2.d8♞ ♜xd8 3.♜h6 ♜~ 4.♜g8 draws. This can be called a 'defensive Indian' because Black is using the Theme to try to prevent White's drawing threats.

3.♜e7? ♜xe7+ 4.g8♞ ♜f6 mate. In the main line, 4...♜a7 5.♜g8.

Timman

1.♜d1+ ♜b1 2.♜h1 a3 3.♜g1 ♜c3 4.♜d4+ ♜b1 5.♜g1 ♜c3 6.♜f2+ ♜b1 7.♜e1 ♜c3 8.♜xc3 ♜b1 9.♜d2 mate.

Jan Timman's addition to the Theme is the interference/stalemate release performed consecutively by two different pieces, and he finishes with an ambush mate by the king.

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